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BANDELLO
TRAGICAL TALES

Modernized and Edited by
HUGH HARRIS

Anno 1778.

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BANDELLO

TRAGICAL TALES

Broadway Translations

BANDELLO

TRAGICAL TALES

The Complete Novels translated by

GEOFFREY FENTON (ANNO 1567)

With an Introduction by

ROBERT LANGTON DOUGLAS

Modernized and edited with a Glossary by

HUGH HARRIS, B.A.

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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS edition of Fenton's Bandello is a revision of the *editio princeps* of 1567.

The original title of *Tragical Discourses* has been replaced by that of *Tragical Tales*, since the word "Discourses" would be likely to mislead the modern reader as to the contents of the volume. Short titles have been given to each story in addition to the summaries prefixed by Fenton; for example, the Eleventh Tale, here entitled *The Silent Lover*, was originally headed: "The cruelty of a widow in enjoining her wooer to a penance of three years' loss of his speech, the foolish loyalty in him in performing her commandment, and the means whereby he was revenged of her rigour."

The spelling has been modernized throughout; with the exception that certain well-known archaisms (such as will be familiar to the general reader) have been retained for their picturesque effect. It was felt, for instance, that to change "astonied" to "astonished" or "saith" to "says" would be to remove one of the charms of the book. In a few instances it has been difficult to decide on the form of spelling. For example, in several passages Fenton employs the word "travel" in the combined sense of "journey" and "labour" (i.e. "travail," as we should now differentiate the latter); while the general lack of uniformity in spelling is particularly unfortunate in the case of a coinage of his own—"colcarrier" —which is not to be found outside this book and is here spelled by him in five different ways.

The names of historical personages or well-known places have been re-spelled, as far as possible, in the forms likely to be most familiar to the reader. It has not, however, been considered necessary to change *e.g.* "Blanche" to "Bianca" or "Seigneur" to "Signor," since such forms are significant as showing that Fenton translated through the French and

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not directly from the Italian. Fenton, it must be remembered, is sometimes guilty of anachronisms and similar mistakes.

The Glossary consists mainly of three classes of words: firstly, words which have now become obsolete; secondly, words which have considerably altered in meaning; and thirdly, foreign words. Obsolete and archaic words whose meaning is sufficiently obvious (such as " cowardness " or "affectioned") have not been noted.

A few grammatical corrections have been made; of these, some were perhaps misprints, and in other cases modern usage has altered, as *e.g.* the word " news " is not now treated as a plural. But to have corrected the text more than thus very occasionally, where it seemed absolutely necessary, would have marred the peculiar quaintness of the work. The use, for instance, of the subjunctive where we should now commonly employ the indicative, or, again, the transposition of an adjective or adverb, has a savour all its own. Similarly, the use of " his " or " her " for " its," " which " for " who," etc., has often been retained, although altered where likely to be really confusing.

I have to tender my cordial thanks to Mr. W. S. Stallybrass for his kind suggestions and help.

HUGH HARRIS.

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INTRODUCTION

I

VASARI, in a well-known passage, tells the story of the artistic awakening of the young Niccolò Pisano. The youth, he says, was at work one day in the Duomo at Pisa, when his attention was arrested by certain pieces of antique sculpture, "spoils of marbles," which the Pisan fleet had brought from Greece. It was, he would have us believe, the contemplation of these works of long-dead masters that led the sculptor's apprentice to become the exponent of a new manner in art, the inaugurator of a great artistic movement.

Modern critics have laboriously demonstrated the improbability of this story. They have shown that there are strong reasons for believing that it is one of those myths that owe their preservation to the credulity of the Aretine artist. And yet, whether it be a myth or not, it enshrines an eternal truth. In the form of allegory, it describes a natural process which is continually being repeated in the history of human civilisation; and, whatever its origin may be, it is of value as a representation of what actually occurred in Italy in the course of the three centuries that followed the birth of the Pisan sculptor.

The Renaissance. That great movement of human thought which we call the Renaissance had, as has often been explained, a dual character. It consisted both of a return to antiquity and a return to nature. The one movement was the necessary outcome of the other. The inevitable effect of the intelligent contemplation of the rediscovered works of classical antiquity upon the men of that age, was that it filled them with an insatiable curiosity, a consuming thirst for new knowledge. For it is a function of the true artist to "plant eyes" in men, to stimulate their powers of observation by revealing to them, here and there, things hitherto unperceived by them, and, at the same time, to fill them with a desire to put to test the new capacities with which, through his instrumentality, they have become endowed.

In Italy at the time of the Renaissance, this phenomenon was to be seen everywhere. Men went out from libraries and museums to look upon the world with new eyes, to discover there, not only things which their dead teachers had taught them to see, but much also that the sculptors and poets of Greece and Rome were themselves incapable of perceiving. And in regard to nothing did these men of the Renaissance display a move avid curiosity than about man himself. Not only were they eager to learn all that it was possible to know about the personages of classical antiquity; they were anxious, also, to view the men around them as they really were, and not in relation to an ecclesiastical system. They were especially interested in all exhibitions of that quality of "virtue" which the study of the classics had taught them to prize.

The novellieri. Full of the inspiration of new ideas, with new senses opened to them, painters and poets, historians and diarists, physiologists and philosophers, dramatists and novelists, sought to express what they saw and felt, and to satisfy in some measure the cravings of their fellow-countrymen. Of all these classes of workers, none appealed to a larger audience than the *novellieri.* In every town in Italy there sprang up writers who professed to relate stories of real life; and, everywhere, their works were eagerly read by the people.

As the movement of the Renaissance spread, the same insatiable curiosity began to show itself on all sides, with the result that the *novelle* of Italy soon found countless readers in France, and Spain, and England. Most of Bandello's tales were rendered into French by François de Belleforest, and his collection of *Histoires Tragiques* passed through many editions. Geoffrey Fenton, William Painter, and other Elizabethans translated these novels out of French into English, and in Ascham's day volumes of Italian love-stories were to be found "in every shop in London," where they commanded a ready sale.

Our debt to the novellieri. They at once exercised a profound effect upon the development of our dramatic literature. It was not merely that the dramatists found in them suitable material for romantic tragedy. To the Italian novelists they owed a deeper debt than that. The contemplation of these vivid pictures of the free and passionate life of

the Italians strangely stirred their senses, and made their sluggish Northern blood course more quickly through their veins. In reading the *novelle* they became filled with a sense of the vast and terrible possibilities of human existence which they had never known before. And thus, ultimately, a powerful stimulus was given to the imaginative reason. Nay, more! these volumes of novels, finding their way into every house, helped to prepare an audience for the dramatists. Thus it was that the *novella*, which, as Symonds says, "struck the keynote of the Renaissance in Italy," had so potent an influence on the most characteristic product of the English Renaissance—the Elizabethan drama.

Amongst the *novellieri* of the *cinque-cento* Matteo Bandello stands pre-eminent. No other Italian writer of that age had a wider influence outside his own country; none was more popular amongst Englishmen. All the best stories in the second tome of Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* were taken from him, whilst Fenton's *Tragical Discourses* is entirely composed of translations of his tales. These "foreign reports" were soon known to all classes of our countrymen. Every one had heard the tragical histories of Rhomeo and Giulietta, of the Countess of Celant, and of the Duchess of Malfi.

II

Matteo Bandello. Matteo Bandello was born at Castelnuovo,[1] a little town situated in a fertile plain, "near where the Scrivia pours its limpid waters into the Po." The air of the place, he tells us, is as temperate as in any part of Lombardy, and "its inhabitants," he adds, "are remarkable for their healthiness and longevity." He came of a noble family which claimed descent, but apparently without sufficient reason, from a Gothic chieftain, a certain Bandelchil, a follower, it was said, of Theodoric. In the year 1495, when he was in his fifteenth year, the young Matteo was placed under the care of his uncle Vincenzo,[2] who was at that time prior of the Dominican monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie at Milan. He was that prior, so tradition says, whose portrait

[1] *Bandello*, Novelle, Parte prima, Novella 23. See ed. Londra (Livorno), 1791-93, vol. ii. p. 154, *et seq.*

[2] *Leandro Alberti*, De viris Illustribus ordinis Praedicatorum, 1517, lib. i. fol. 47, *et seq.*

Leonardo painted for the head of Judas, because of his tiresome importunity. Nevertheless, whatever his faults may have been, Vincenzo was a popular ecclesiastic, revered by the members of his order, and on terms of friendship with most of the great Italians of his time. He was distinguished both as an administrator and as a controversialist, and his treatise on the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is still quoted by theologians.[1]

The luxurious life of the Milanese. At Milan, Matteo found himself at once in an environment that was congenial to one of his pleasure-loving temperament. The city, at that time larger than either London or Paris, and more wealthy than any other in Italy, was the seat of the most brilliant court in Europe. Its citizens were firm believers in the precepts of " the libertine school of Cyrene " ; and, until the storm of foreign invasion scattered their *lieta brigata,* life was for them one perpetual pageant. They were for ever courting new impressions of pleasure. Rich and novel things were brought to the city from the ends of the earth, from the New World and from farthest Ind. Artists and literary men, mimes and singers, flocked thither, attracted by the munificence of that ill-fated Mæcenas of the *cinque-cento,* Lodovico il Moro. Pre-eminent amongst those to whom the Duke extended his patronage was the great Leonardo himself ; and with him the young Bandello became acquainted in the years 1497 and 1498, when the Master, at the bidding of il Moro, was engaged in painting his *cenacolo* in the refectory of the Dominican house.

Bandello's descriptions of Milanese society. The Church of Santa Maria had been much resorted to by Beatrice d'Este ; and in the month that followed her death her inconsolable husband caused a hundred torches to be kept alight there, and a hundred masses to be said for the repose of her soul. Lodovico himself was a frequent visitor at the monastery, and its prior was in high favour at court. Vincenzo's young nephew, therefore, with his agreeable manners and pleasant voice, soon became a popular figure in Milanese society. In his novels he has left us more than one picture of the free, luxurious life of the people of the city. He tells us much of their sumptuous banquets and of their trains of chariots overlaid with gold, " worthy of an emperor's triumph." He

[1] *Pusey,* Second Eirenicon, p. 372.

never tires of descanting upon the beauty of the ladies of Milan and the splendour of their apparel. "When one of these appears at a palace door, it is," he declares, "as though one looked upon the Assumption in the city of Venice." Moreover, these fair dames were not less complaisant than beautiful. They were, he admits, not niggardly of their charms, but rather were "much disposed to love and to be loved." What wonder was it, then, that the youth of the place followed the oft-quoted Horatian maxim, and gave themselves up to "dulces amores"; riding "on barbs and jennets splendidly caparisoned from palace to palace"; after the manner of the bee that goes about from flower to flower, drawing sweetness out of loveliness?

Bandello's first love. The young friar was indeed no ascetic, and it was not long before he put into practice the lessons taught in this school of Circe. It was in 1505 that Bandello first became a lover. In the summer of that year he set out for Rome, where he intended to join his uncle, who had then become General of the Dominican order. On his way thither he halted for a considerable time at Florence, staying at the Convent of Santa Maria Novella; and it was whilst he was in that city that he fell in love with a young girl named Violante, whose charms of character and person he celebrated in many sonnets. Bandello was a convinced Platonist, and it would not be fair to place too literal a construction on all the expressions to be found in his verses. Nevertheless, as he has himself told us, in one of his tales of illicit passion, that he had trodden the whole labyrinth of love, we do him no injustice in assuming that not all of his attachments were of that order popularly styled Platonic. His love for Violante was the great passion of his life. He never tired of singing of her grace and loveliness, of her rosy lips, of her fair hair, of her eyes that were like clear shining stars. "She was so beautiful that heaven itself was jealous of her." For one short year he enjoyed her love, and then she was suddenly taken from him.[1] But the remembrance of her beauty haunted him throughout a long life.[2] "Thou

[1] *Bandello*, Rime, tratte da un codice della R. Biblioteca di Torino, e pubblicate per la prima volta, dal Dott. L. Costa, Torino, 1816, Sonetto xxxvi., p. 56. Sonetti cx. (p. 171) and cxli. (p. 213) also have reference to Violante's illness and death.

[2] *Bandello*, Canti xi. de le Lodi de la S. Lucretia Gonzaga di Gazuolo, etc., Reboglio, Agen, 1545, Canto vi.

hast traversed," he says to himself in his old age, " many seas, countries, and rivers " :

> E sempre le Viole furon teco,
> Perche il tuo cor se ne portare seco.

A favourite of fortune. He was with his uncle in Calabria when the news of Violante's death reached him. The shock was so great that the young friar became seriously ill ; but he revived somewhat after that his royal friend, Beatrice of Aragon, full of pity for his distress, had administered to him a crushed emerald and other costly remedies. He was still far from well when another great calamity overtook him. His uncle Vincenzo, who had been to him as a second father, died, *postquam paucis diebus ægrotavit.* Robbed at once of his patron and his dear mistress, Matteo returned to Milan bearing a heavy heart in a sick body. He seems to have sought for distraction in political and literary pursuits. At any rate, in 1508 he went on a mission to the Court of France, and in the following year he published his first book, a Latin version of a novel by Boccaccio. It was not long before his fortunes again took a favourable turn. He was one of those beings to whom the capricious goddess " displays even more than her accustomed mobility." Now she showers upon him blow after blow. Now she makes his life all that he could wish it to be. But, on the whole, he must be regarded as singularly fortunate. He lived a variegated, dramatic life, full of incident and adventure. He was on terms of intimate friendship with the most beautiful and most cultured women of his age. He was brought into direct contact with its most notable personages, its princes and statesmen, its poets and painters, its philosophers and *savants*, its historians and strategists, its hierarchs and heresiarchs, its buffoons and courtesans. Francis the First and Lodovico il Moro, Bembo and Castiglione, Vittoria Colonna and Margaret of Navarre, Leonardo da Vinci and Luigi Alamanni, Guicciardini and Machiavelli, Giovanni delle Bande Nere and Prospero Colonna, Isabella of Mantua and Veronica Gambara, J. C. Scaliger and Aldo Manuzio, Calcagnino and Gonnella, Isabella da Luna and Caterina di San Celso—all these knew the popular Dominican, and nearly all had the pleasure of hearing from his own lips one of his inimitable tales. " His whole life was a *novella*," a story full of life and movement.

Bandello discovers his true vocation. He is especially to be envied, in that, whilst still a young man, he found what his true function was. It was a woman, an intimate friend of his, Ippolita Sforza, the wife of Alessandro Bentivoglio, and grand-niece of Lodovico il Moro, who helped him to make this discovery. Until he knew her, and for some little time after, he was regarded by the public as a brilliant young member of the order of Preachers; he was known primarily as a learned and eloquent rhetorician. But at the time that he was an inmate of the Bentivogli palace at Milan it became clear to him that his true *rôle* was that of a *raconteur* rather than that of a preacher, that it was to be his part to amuse rather than to teach his generation; although, like some novelists of our own day, he seems to have thought, sometimes, that an artist might take upon himself the office of a moral or religious teacher without injury to his art.

Ippolita Bentivoglio. Ippolita Bentivoglio was a remarkable woman in an age that produced many remarkable women. We can understand something of her charm as we look upon her grave, sweet face, painted by Luini on the eastern wall of the church of the Monastero Maggiore in her native city. Possessed herself of high intellectual qualities, she devoted some of her great wealth to the patronage of artists and men of letters. She became strongly attached to Bandello, and in her house he found a pleasant refuge and congenial society. There, too, he was brought into contact with persons like the Countess of Celant and the Duchess of Malfi's ill-fated husband, whose tragical histories he afterwards gave to the world. It was at the request of his patroness that he first began to write down the *novelle* that he had himself told, or had heard, in her house.

Isabella d'Este. His fidelity to the Sforza faction ultimately made it expedient for Bandello to quit Milan. Driven from the city by political discords, he took refuge at Mantua, where he enjoyed the friendship of Isabella d'Este. There, surrounded again by a *lieta brigata* of artists and poets, of lords and ladies, he often discoursed of affairs of love, and won admiration by his skill as a narrator. So far did he succeed in gaining the esteem of the great Duchess, that, when certain "envious malignants"[1] complained to the General

[1] *Bandello*, Novelle, Parte terza, Novella 42. See ed. cit., vol. viii., p. 76.

of his order of the too great freedom of the Dominican's walk and conversation, Isabella at once took up his defence, and despatched to his superior an extraordinary document,[1] in which she testified to the religious and modest life of her friend, and extolled his innumerable virtues. How Bandello was revered and beloved in his own day is shown in the eulogies of him written by Leandro Alberti[2] and J. C. Scaliger; by the high value that J. J. Scaliger set upon Bandello's appreciation of his father; as well as in the allusions that are made to him by other contemporary writers. It has been left to squeamish critics of later ages to pour abuse upon the name of this genial writer to whom literature owes so much.

The sack of Milan: Bandello's manuscripts lost. In the year 1520 Bandello returned to his beloved Milan. He spent five uneventful years there; and then a great disaster befell him. In the sack of the city that followed upon the battle of Pavia, his father's house was burnt down, and the precious manuscripts of his *novelle* were lost. After some years of wandering, he became secretary to Cesare Fregoso, a *condottiere*, and a member of a noble Genoese family, whose wife, Costanza Rangona, was a connection of Bandello's old friends the Gonzagas. Fregoso, who at that time was in the service of the Venetian Republic, bore a somewhat ill name, as may be seen from the Venetian State papers[3]; but, cruel and unscrupulous as he was in his public life, he seems to have been beloved, and even respected, by many honourable men.[4] Brought up at the Court of France, amidst all his treacheries and tergiversations, he remained true at heart to his adopted country, and was always loved and trusted by its sovereign, Francis I. A born conspirator, he ran many serious risks in the cause of France, and it was in her service that he ultimately met with his death.

Bandello at Garda and Verona. Bandello troubled himself but little with the political affairs which occupied his patron. He had "found himself," and he wished only to be allowed to live his own life. Through the generosity of Fregoso, he was

[1] *Luzio*, I Precettori d'Isabella d'Este, Ancona, 1887, p. 45.

[2] *Leandro Alberti*, op. cit., fol. 137 and fol. 132.

[3] Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, 1534-1554, Nos. 413, 428, 431, 456.

[4] *Uberti Folietæ*, Clarorum Ligurum Elogia, Romæ, 1574, p. 126. *Paolo Giovio*, ed. 1572, vol. ii., p. 84; and several passages in Bandello's novels and J. C. Scaliger's poems.

now able to live "a se e alle Muse." He held converse with his friends on the shore of that beautiful lake of which Virgil and Catullus sang, and which was described in Bandello's own day by that master of Italian prose, Jacopo Bonfadio. At the same time, Platonist as he was, he took a singular delight in the more material pleasures which Fregoso provided so liberally for his friends. In the prefaces to some of his novels he speaks enthusiastically of the "Lucullian banquets" that the *condottiere* was accustomed to give at Garda, in a castle of his which had once belonged to the Scaligers.

The war in Piedmont. But at length Bandello's quiet was again disturbed. Fregoso, who had all along been in secret communication with the French Court, suddenly deserted his Venetian employers, and again publicly entered the service of France. He accepted a command in Piedmont, and, so Morosini tells us, took with him some of his Veronese friends, much to the wrath of the Republic. For nigh on two years Bandello lived in a manner which left him little leisure for his favourite pursuits. Throughout two campaigns—the story of which was told by his own friend Ferron,[1] and, with fuller detail, by Guillaume and Martin du Bellay[2]—he accompanied his patron, bewailing amongst the hills and valleys of Piedmont the loss of his accustomed ease. At last a respite came from wandering. On the conclusion of the Truce of Nice, Bandello went with Fregoso to Castelgiuffredo, the seat of Luigi Gonzaga, where were Costanza Fregoso and her sister Ginevra, as well as a beautiful young girl, an orphan, named Lucrezia, whom Bandello had known as a "bambolina" in the house of her father.

Lucrezia Gonzaga. There again the novelist lived "to himself and the Muses." He resumed once more the composition of his tales, and wrote several sonnets and *canzoni*. He also acted as tutor to "la divinissima Lucrezia," reading with her the poetry of Greece and of Rome. His young pupil was beautiful, intelligent, and sympathetic; and Bandello, old as he was, became very much in love with her. She stood only second in his affections to his dead Violante, whom, he declared, she strongly resembled.

[1] *Arnoldi Ferroni, Burdigalensis*, De rebus gestis Gallorum, Lutetiæ, 1555, lib. viii.

[2] *Du Bellay*, Les mémoires de Mess. Martin du Bellay et de Mess. Guillaume du Bellay, Paris, 1569. See books vii. and viii.

This pleasant sojourn at Castelgiuffredo came to an end all too soon. In July, 1540,[1] Costanza Fregoso went to Castiglione for change of air. Her husband, who was in ill-health, followed her there immediately ; and whilst they were away, the lady of the castle, Costanza's sister Ginevra, died suddenly. A few days later Lucrezia Gonzaga and her sister returned to the family seat at Gazuolo, leaving Bandello " pieno d'amarissima doglia." Thus was this happy company sadly broken up.

Fregoso's assassination. But all these changes were but preludes to a greater mutation, a tragedy which altered the whole subsequent course of Bandello's life. In June, 1541, Cesare Fregoso, when on his way to Venice as an ambassador from the French Court, was assassinated near Pavia by certain soldiers from that place, at the instigation of the Marquis of Vasto, the Imperial Governor of Milan.[2] On hearing the terrible news, the widowed Costanza herself went to Venice. But she was soon compelled to fly that city ; as the authorities of the Republic discovered that her husband had again played them false, and had been one of the prime movers in a plot by means of which the most intimate secrets of the Ten were revealed to French Statesmen. Thereupon Costanza made her way to France, accompanied by her faithful secretary Bandello, and threw herself on the compassion of the King. In recognition of Fregoso's services, Francis made her the best reparation in his power. Through his liberality she was enabled to live in almost royal state at the castle of Bazens, near Agen, in the midst of a district which, so Reclus tells us, is the most fertile in all France. In that pleasant retreat above the valley of the Masse she was visited by Margaret of Navarre and other great personages connected with the Court. Her house was always open to poets, artists, and scholars, and she entertained lavishly the aristocracy of the province. There the happy novelist spent much of his time in the library, cheered, as were Catullus and Verlaine, by the constant companionship of another " blithe poet," a sweet-songed bird[3] whom he dearly loved. He directed, too, the education of the sons of his patroness,

[1] *Ronchini*, Lettere d'uomini illustri conservate in Parma nel R. Archivio di Stato, Parma, 1853, vol. i., pp. 67-89.

[2] *Du Bellay*, ed. cit., book ix., pp. 274, 275.

[3] *Julii Cæsaris Scaligeri*, Poemata omnia, ed. 1621 ; Farrago, p. 162.

and for a time held the cure of Cabalsaut, a village near to Bazens.

J. C. Scaliger. It was not the first time that Agen had played an important part in the history of those connected movements of which that called the Renaissance was merely the culminating one. For from Agen had gone forth that monk Raymond,[1] afterwards Archbishop of Toledo, who was, in the twelfth century, one of the chief promoters of the study of the scientific works of Aristotle, and to whom Joannes Avendeath dedicated his translation of the "Logic" of Avicenna. To Agen, four centuries later, came J. C. Scaliger, who first sought to re-establish the authority of Aristotle in the world of letters. He had already been living there for some years when Costanza Fregoso first took up her residence at the old episcopal palace near that city. Having met Bandello at Mantua, he became a regular visitor to Bazens; and, notwithstanding his inordinate vanity, this genial, learned *farceur* seems soon to have won the affection of the lady of the *château*. Indeed, Scaliger, although a sexagenarian, professed himself to have fallen a victim to Costanza's beauty, and he sang the charms of his mature mistress in many a stilted verse. To her he dedicated his "Thaumantia," his "Lacrymæ," his "Nova Epigrammata," and other of his works. Although Scaliger held in contempt all "porci clerici," he became strongly attached to Bandello. He not only wrote poetical panegyrics of the novelist; he also composed verses in honour of the ladies whom his Platonist friend had honoured with his love. In fact, during their years of companionship at Agen, the two old men seem to have passed a considerable portion of their time in scribbling love-poems, the one in Latin, the other in Italian; for at that time Bandello was busy preparing for the press his "Canti" in praise of the divine Lucrezia, which were published at Agen in 1545.

Bandello Bishop of Agen. Five years later Bandello was raised to the episcopate. He accepted the see of Agen with the intention of holding it only until his pupil Ettore Fregoso was ready to take it, and most of his duties were performed by Jean Valier, bishop of Grasse. There is evidence, however,

[1] *Francisco de Pisa*, Historia de Toledo, Toledo, 1617, Primera Parte, lib. iv., cap. 3, p. 166. *Charles Jourdain*, Recherches sur les Traductions d'Aristote, Paris, 1843, p. 108.

in the local archives[1] to show that Bandello really exercised his office, although for the most part he continued to live to himself and the Muses. Some time before he was made a bishop, Bandello had been gladdened by the almost miraculous recovery of the manuscripts which had been lost in the sack of Milan. Thus encouraged, he resumed the preparation of his novels for the press, and in 1554 the first three volumes of his collection were published by Busdrago of Lucca. The fourth and last volume did not see the light until twenty years later, long after the death of its author.

The death of Bandello. Of the closing years of Bandello's life but little is known. He died about 1562, having resigned his see some years before in favour of Giano, the eldest son of his patron ; and he was buried in the church of the Jacobins at Agen, at the foot of the high altar. The last words that he addressed to the public were, " Live merry ! " " Vivete lieti ! " In those words he summed up a great part of his philosophy. It was a fitting farewell speech from the lips of one who had done so much to amuse his age.

III

Much that is irrelevant and futile has been written in regard to the licentiousness of Bandello's tales and the profligacy of the generation for whom they were composed. It is well-nigh impossible for us to arrive at anything like a just and adequate judgment upon the moral state and acts of the men of a race and an age unlike our own. If it be ever desirable to attempt to do so, such a task should only be entered upon by one who has undergone a special training, and who has a certain rare habit of mind. Unfortunately the vast majority of modern pronouncements on subjects of this kind have been as worthless as they have been impertinent ; for they have been the utterances of men who, whilst possessing in some cases high literary gifts, have lacked the most necessary qualification for their self-conferred office. These so-confident judges have failed to realise that " nothing man has projected from himself is really intelligible except at its

[1] It is as curious that none of Bandello's many biographers have taken the trouble to consult the archives of the *département* of Lot-et-Garonne, as that, with one single exception, they have all been content to copy down, without further inquiry, the marvellous blunders of Mazzuchelli.

own date, and from its proper point of view in the never-resting 'secular process.'" They have shown themselves to be lacking in that "historic sense, which, by an imaginative act, throws itself back into a world unlike one's own," and estimates everything belonging to it "in its connection with the age from which it proceeded."

Bandello's defence. Although Bandello's own defence of his stories is quite clear, and up to a certain point reasonable enough, his contentions have been seriously misunderstood and misrepresented. He had endeavoured, so he tells us, to write true histories of events which had actually occurred, many of them within his own time. He had sought to make permanent addition to the materials of that science of human action of which every wise man is a student. He had described, he admits, "unhonest and vicious deeds"; but, like Milton, he believed that "the knowledge and survey of vice is, in this world, necessary to the constituting of human virtue." Nay, more; although he had not, in most cases, composed his stories with any directly didactic purpose, but merely to amuse, yet in relating them he had, he contended, taken care to condemn vice and to uphold goodness to admiration; he had always clearly pointed out the punishments that ultimately overtake the wicked, as well as the happiness and glory that are the sure reward of right conduct.

The art of Bandello. Whether Bandello succeeded in exercising a salutary moral influence upon the readers of his stories is, of course, an open question; but there can be no doubt of his success in realising his literary aims. He gave to the world vivid pictures of social life, as it was at the very centre of intellectual and artistic progress in one of the most important epochs of human history.

Bandello and Defoe. In some not unimportant points he strongly resembles our first great English novelist. Like Defoe, after having been trained to fulfil the office of a preacher, he devoted some of his best energies to the composition of profane stories. Like Defoe, too, he occasionally showed, in his novels, a regrettable tendency to revert to his original vocation. Like Defoe, "he was never gravelled for lack of matter, and had no nice ideas about manner." Both novelists had "a natural infirmity of homely, plain writing." Both, too, in spite of many faults of style, had, in an extraordinary measure, the power of imparting

verisimilitude to a story. Such popularity as Bandello won for himself in his own country was almost entirely due to the possession of this quality. Living amongst a people who have been always so keenly alive to the importance of manner, he ever showed too little regard for it. His sentences were often awkward. His vocabulary was unchastened. His whole mode of expression lacked grace and distinction. And yet he never fails to make the events he is describing appear real to the reader. His style had, as D'Ancona says, "la grande efficacia representativa."

Bandello and the purists. His success was largely due to his adherence to a line of conduct which many distinguished critics in his own day thought to be unjustifiable. He persisted in telling his stories in his own rough northern speech.[1] "I am not a Tuscan," he says, "but a Lombard, a descendant of the Ostrogoths. Were the Tuscan language natural to me, I would gladly use it, for I know it to be chaste and beautiful, but I cannot now attempt to use a language not my own." With his friend Castiglione[2] he believed that a man who has anything to say will express it best in his own native tongue; and that out of it he will gather his own vocabulary, adding here and there strong and graceful words of foreign origin. Like him, too, he held that a language, if it is living, is perpetually changing, and that it is folly in a writer to heed too much the censures of purists and pedants. So to the last he continued to express himself in the Lombard idiom, and did not scruple to use the racy colloquialisms of the ordinary conversational speech of the day whenever it suited his purpose.

IV

François de Belleforest. Amongst the literary *coterie* that Costanza Fregoso gathered round her at the castle of Bazens was to be found, no doubt, a young poet of the province, named François de Belleforest, a *protégé* of her friend the Queen of Navarre. He was the son of a soldier of fortune, a man of a noble family, who had died young, leaving his wife in straitened circumstances. She sought to give her boy

[1] *Bandello*, Novelle, Parte prima, Dedica ad Ippolita Sforza Bentivoglio; ed. cit., vol. i., pp. 4, 5. Also Parte terza, Il Bandello ai lettori; ed. cit., vol. vii., p. 9.

[2] *Castiglione*, Il Cortegiano, Lettera dedicatoria, ii.

a good education, and was much helped in her efforts by Queen Margaret. At the age of seven or eight years François left home, and was nurtured in the royal palace. "The tenth Muse" inspired him with that love of *novelle* which clung to him throughout his life. To her influence, too, may be traced the intolerable prolixity of his style and his tiresome habit of moralising. His patroness destined the boy for the law; and he was sent, whilst still very young, to the famous college at Bordeaux, where he had for his teachers Muret and George Buchanan, and for one of his fellow-students a certain indolent youth who bore the name of Michel Eyquem de Montaigne. Like the young Montaigne, he subsequently became a student at the great legal school of Toulouse. Whilst there he grew weary of the dryness of his legal studies, and, renouncing the idea of becoming a lawyer, he determined to devote himself to the profession of poetry. He was not without certain valuable literary qualities, and, had he taken pains to improve himself in his art, he might have attained to a respectable position as a maker of verses. But he was a vain, self-satisfied youth, gifted with a fatal fluency of expression, who spent his time in ladies' boudoirs, and was ready to believe all that his feminine admirers were pleased to say about his otiose productions. And so it happened that such natural gifts as he had remained undeveloped. He was, in fact, one of those unhappy beings who are without any power of self-criticism, and to whom the severer discipline of the world's great school comes too late to be of any service.

Belleforést at Agen. After quitting Toulouse, he wandered about from *château* to *château* in his native province, living, as his friend Du Verdier tells us,[1] "parmi les délices de la noblesse, à courtiser et faire des vers Françoises pour plaire aux dames et demoiselles." It was during this period of his life that he resided at Agen, and acted as tutor in the household of a certain M. de Nort, a staunch Catholic himself, but at the head of a family which gave more than one champion to the Protestant cause. In the *Histoires Tragiques* he has left us a description of the city as it appeared to him at that time.[2] "It was," he says, "a veritable *coupe-gorge*, full of thievish

[1] *Antoine du Verdier*, Bibliothèque des Auteurs François; ed. de *Rigoley de Juvigny*, Paris, 1772-73; tom. iii., p. 608.

[2] *Belleforest*, Histoires Tragiques, Rouen edition, 1604; tom. vi., pp. 204-6.

financiers, voluptuous priests, and lewd young students of the law, who robbed women of their honour and the poor of the fruits of their labour, passing their time in chambering and wantonness."

The Pleiad. Tired at last of his wandering life, which brought him but little wealth, Belleforest determined if possible to win fame and fortune in the capital. When he reached Paris the constellation of the Pleiad was in the ascendant. The young Commingeois became a part of that nebula of minor stars that clustered round the seven greater lights of that galaxy of poets. He was admitted to the friendship of Baïf and Dorat, as well as of Ronsard himself. Unfortunately, genius, if it be a disease, is not a zymotic one, and Belleforest could not succeed in imparting to his verses that subtle charm that characterised the work of his friends. He was, in fact, one of the poetasters of Ronsard's school described by Pater, in whom "the grace of the master lapsed into affectation, his learning into pedantry, his exotic fineness into a trick."

Like Ronsard, he was a zealous champion of Mary Queen of Scots; and when, owing to a change of paymasters, George Buchanan from being her sycophant became her slanderer,[1] Belleforest defended the queen against "les calomnies faulces et impositions iniques" of his old tutor and hers.

The Histoires Tragiques. Belleforest's early prose writings met with a better reception than his verse had done. The *Histoires Tragiques* passed, as has been said, through several editions, and was eagerly read throughout France. In the preparation of the first volume, Belleforest had as collaborator the historian Pierre Boistuau de Launay; but out of the one hundred and twenty-five novels of the complete collection, all but six were translated or written by Belleforest himself. His history of the nine kings of France who had borne the name of Charles—the least inaccurate, and the most readable, too, of all his works,—gained for him the post of historiographer of France.

Belleforest's fall. But though, for a time, fortune flattered him with delusive hopes, the success that he sought never came to him. His entire lack of the qualifications

[1] *Belleforest,*" L'innocence de la très illustre, très chaste, et débonnaire Princesse, Madame Marie, Royne d'Ecosse," Lyons, 1572; a reply to George Buchanan's "Detection," published under the initials F.B.

required to fill properly the office he held became patent to everyone, and he was soon deposed from it. The later volumes, too, of the *Histoires Tragiques* did not have quite the same success as the earlier ones. Belleforest gradually sank lower and lower, until at last the petted darling of the ladies of Guienne, the friend of princes and nobles, became a mere publisher's hack, slaving away with pathetic perseverance to get bread for his household. Of such literary qualities as he had once possessed, the only one that survived was his extraordinary fecundity. He had, said one of his contemporaries, "les moules à faire les livres." He tried his hand at all kinds of literary work; and, in the course of a few years, he produced no less than eighty volumes, all equally devoid of distinction. He engaged in tuition to eke out his scanty literary earnings, and also made persistent efforts to secure the help and patronage of the wealthy and the great. With this end in view, he wrote fulsome eulogies of several persons holding high positions in the state. But the king and his courtiers turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the poor Commingeois poet. Charles may, as Pater believed, have been sincere in his reverence for literature; but, except in the case of Ronsard, he was never liberal in his treatment of literary men.[1] "Les poètes," he said, "resembloient, en certaines choses, aux genets et autres généreux chevaux qu'il fault nourrir sans engrosser, à fin qu'ils ne deviennent porcs." Belleforest's position became more and more hopeless as he advanced in years. At length he was so hard driven by poverty, that he stole the fruits of another man's labour to sell it for bread; he was guilty of the most flagrant plagiarism. By nature an honourable gentleman, this offence weighed upon his conscience, and on his death-bed he sent for André Thevet, the man whom he had injured, and, in the presence of witnesses, he earnestly begged his forgiveness.

Belleforest's style. To the end of his life he remained loyal to his affection for *novelle*. Excepting his verse, it was the only literary work that he did *con amore*. His seven volumes of *Histoires Tragiques* contained some novels entirely by his own hand; and in those that were professedly translations he by no means literally adhered to the original. These tales of his were no mere hack-work. He had his own

[1] *Belleforest*, Les Chroniques et Annales de France; ed. Paris, 1600, p. 648.

views as to how a story ought to be told, and he sought with much effort to realise his artistic ideal. Unfortunately that ideal was an utterly false one, and he shamefully marred some of Bandello's best tales. Belleforest had a very poor opinion of the bishop's style, which was much too direct, simple, and unadorned for the courtier-poet. He therefore set to work to " embellish " the *novelle* by inserting classical allusions, and similes taken from natural history ; by introducing here and there an inane poem or a turgid speech ; by besprinkling all the text with precious phrases. Moreover, being, like his first patroness, a most intolerable prig, he was fond of interrupting the narrative to deliver himself of trite little aphorisms and moral commonplaces. Thus, a brisk, amusing story he sometimes transformed into a tediously dull one by his impertinent embellishments. Nevertheless, so strong, and so universal, was the passion for *novelle*, that his *Histoires Tragiques* became widely popular, notwithstanding his faults as a narrator.

V

Geoffrey Fenton. The early volumes of Belleforest's translations happened to fall into the hands of a young Englishman, Geoffrey Fenton, a kinsman, it is said, of the Dudleys and the Cecils, who for a time was resident in Paris. It is probable that he had come to France in the train of that lover of Italian culture, Sir Thomas Hoby, whose career as an ambassador was cut short by death in the autumn of 1566. Fenton came of an old Nottinghamshire family, of no great wealth though with powerful connections ; and, like many young men of his class, he left his ancestral home to follow the career of a soldier of fortune. Of his early history but little is known. It has been asserted, and with some show of reason, that in his youth, he visited the Court of Spain and some of the great Italian cities. At any rate, in the year 1567 we find him living in Paris, an eager student of the literatures of France and Italy. And it was whilst he was residing there that he spent some of his " void hours " in " forcing certain Tragical Discourses out of their French terms into our English phrase."

The Tragical Discourses. There were strong practical reasons which led Fenton, at the age of twenty-eight, to devote

himself to literature. Having wandered in his youth "in the labyrinth of sensuality," he had by that time "found the fault" of his own life. He had broken, at last, "the sleep of his long folly," and had "retired to amendment of life." Ambitious and hopeful in spite of present misfortune, he determined to obtain for himself a position in the world, and took for his own the confident motto, "Mon heur viendra." He was shrewd enough to see that any well-bred and comely young man, possessed of ability and judgment, might hope to win the smiles of the queen; and that literary success was one of the surest avenues to her favour. To literature, therefore, he determined to devote himself; and, with excellent judgment, he dedicated this his first book to one of Elizabeth's most intimate friends, a lady who had lost her beauty through her devotion to her sovereign, the mother of that Astrophel who was "the President of all nobleness and chivalry." Twelve years later, when the goal which he had striven to reach was then looming near, when he was, as it were, almost on the threshold of the royal chamber, and was about to be admitted to his sovereign's closest confidence, he dedicated his crowning work, his translation of Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia*, to Elizabeth herself. In the preface to the *Tragical Discourses*, as well as in several of the interpolations in the text of them, he tells us of the many troubles that pressed upon him in his early manhood. He bewails "the mobility of fortune" and his own penuriousness. He complains of the fickleness of some "light, inconstant dame" who, "for the respect of present pleasure, was unmindful of her absent friend," Yet more bitterly does he upbraid his own kinsmen for their heartless neglect of him. "Friends nowadays," he exclaims, "resemble the raven or hungry kite, who never flieth but towards the place where they hope to find something to prey upon. So the friends of our age be fled so far from the virtue of true friendship, that they will not only refuse to restore him whom God and nature hath bound them to sustain, but also make no conscience to disclaim the name of a kinsman to the nearest ally they have, and that without any cause, unless you will impute it to the want of equal wealth." His own experience, he tells us, moves him "to make a challenge" to some in England; and he wishes that "his power were as indifferent to plead"

with the chief offender as he has "just reason to put him in remembrance of his fault."

Fenton's other works. For Fenton the years that followed the publication of the *Tragical Discourses* were full of literary effort. Besides translating some theological treatises, in which he displayed the vigour of his Protestantism, he published, in 1572, a monstrously dull book, a translation from the French, entitled "*Monophilo*, a philosophical discourse and division of love," as well as another volume, which consisted of a collection of passages taken chiefly from Guevara's works, and to which he gave the title of *Golden Epistles*. His last literary performance was that translation of Guicciardini's History of which mention has already been made.

Fenton was now no longer without powerful patrons. His kinsmen had ceased to treat him with coldness; and, although his twelve years of work as an author and translator had brought him but little wealth, he had won for himself many friends who were willing to use their influence on his behalf. Sir Henry Sidney and his wife, the learned Lady Hoby, Walsingham and Pelham, his brother Edward and the great Burghley—all in some way or other lent him their aid. But more than that, he had succeeded in gaining the confidence of the queen herself. And now, having used literature as a means to win royal favour and to obtain for himself a position in the world, when he had attained his object, like a successful *parvenu* he kicked down the ladder by which he had risen. He turned his back upon authorship, and devoted his undivided energies to the more profitable trade in which his friends and kinsmen had found him employment.

Fenton deserts literature for politics. It was in the summer of 1580 that Fenton,[1] through the intervention on his behalf of Burghley and Walsingham, obtained the post of Secretary to the new Lord Deputy of Ireland, Lord Grey de Wilton. In the train of Lord Grey there was another, and more distinguished, servant of the Muses, Edmund Spenser, who, in his great work, has left us allegorical representations of some of the Englishmen who held office in Ireland in his own day. How near to the truth are these ideal portraits of

[1] The details of Fenton's political life are to be found in the Calendar of State Papers, Ireland, the Carew Papers, and the Lismore Papers, second series, ed. by A. B. Grosart.

Ireland's rulers he can best estimate who knows the stories of their glorious deeds as told by some of the heroes who shared in them. Only one who has patiently read through the Irish State Papers can realise fully how unlike to the gentle knights of Spenser's allegory were these cruel, squalid place-hunters who battened on the wretched Irish ; how far removed were these mercenary sycophants from the Arthegalls and Sir Guyons of the *Faërie Queene*. Their own letters and despatches reveal to the full their cruelty, their falsity, their meanness. In them we see the fiendish delight taken by such brave gentlemen as Captain Thomas Woodhouse and Sir Richard Bingham in the butchery of half-armed starving men and helpless women and children.[1] We see honourable personages continually employed in secretly traducing rival sycophants, and in sending private accusations against their colleagues to the queen's ministers in England. Friend betrays friend ; comrade spies on comrade ; almost anyone of the rascal crew is ready to sell his soul for a piece of gold. Their lust for loot is insatiable. Each one of them is continually begging for wardships, confiscations, and sequestrated parsonages. And how wildly they rage when one of the pack, stronger or more cunning than the rest, carries off some quarry before their eyes !

Elizabeth. The best that can be said for Fenton is, that he did not sink quite so low as some of his rivals. To him, as to the rest, notwithstanding all his high-sounding phrases, the pursuit of politics was primarily a *métier*. But, hireling as he was, he was neither lacking in gratitude, nor in a certain kind of loyalty to his employer. He was intelligent enough, too, to see that whilst an impostor might, for a time, obtain the favour of the queen by pandering to her vanity or her amorousness, such triumphs were but short-lived. Her keen intuitiveness, her thorough knowledge of human nature, and, above all, her masculine common-sense, prevented her from being long the dupe of a deceiver. He therefore set to work to establish himself in her confidence ; and he was so far successful, that in the end the queen came to trust to him as the most reliable source of information in regard to Irish

[1] Calendar of State Papers, Ireland, 1586-8, Sept. 29, 1586, Woodhouse to Fenton ; also in same vol., Bynghan's discourse to Burghley, Oct. 6, 1586 ; and a letter of Sir William Herbert's, Oct. 20, 1588. See also the Burkes' " complaints," in the next volume, Nov. 20, 1589.

affairs. "Whoever was Lord Deputy in Ireland," says one of his biographers, "he continued to be Elizabeth's counsellor there; as a man upon whom she depended, from whom she took her notions of the state of affairs, whose credit was not to be shaken by the artifices of any faction whatever." His position was indeed a powerful one; but it is difficult to see how any honourable gentleman could have played the part that he did for nigh upon three decades. Throughout this time it was his practice to keep a close watch upon the actions of his colleagues and professed friends, and to send secret information of their conduct to his sovereign and her chief ministers. He was about their path continually, and spied out all their ways. Their hasty words, their slightest omissions of duty, their petty peculations, were all noted down by her Majesty's "faithful servitor," and were reported to her or her chief ministers. "He was," said his contemporaries, "a moth in the garment," "a flea in the bed," of all the lord deputies of that time. By no means a precisian in his own practice, he was, like many of his school, extremely censorious of the conduct of others, and did not use with moderation and charity the extraordinary powers which he possessed. Consequently, although he was discreet and secret in his manner of communicating information to the Court, men soon began to suspect him, and he came, ultimately, to be more deeply and universally hated than any other officer of the queen in Ireland.

Fenton's first period of humiliation. But although his enemies were ceaselessly at work, they were unable to deprive him of his unique position, and twice only did they succeed in winning even a temporary advantage over him. Fenton's first reverse occurred in 1587. In January of that year, Sir John Perrot, knowing that "malicious tongues" were continually speaking evil of him to those in authority, in his eagerness for revenge was guilty of an act of injustice which caused Fenton some humiliation and suffering. The Lord Deputy caused his enemy to be arrested, carried through the streets of Dublin on a market-day, and thrust into the common gaol. The queen took up the case of her servant, ordered her hot-headed brother to release Fenton immediately, and bade him forbear that hard kind of proceeding in like case thereafter. From that time until the end of the reign, Fenton's power remained unimpaired. The queen herself

wrote to him some years later, saying that it was in him that she reposed her trust "to receive her privatest dispatches."

Fenton's second period of humiliation. But after her death his enemies had an opportunity which they did not fail to take advantage of. Full of insular prejudices, hating and despising both French and Spaniards, Italians and Irish, Fenton, in his official communications, had been especially bitter in his abuse of the Scots. "They are," he declared, "a needy and beggarly race, and full of treachery." He was averse to introducing them into Ulster to supplant the rebel Irish. "Dogs," said he, "will not eat dogs' flesh." Towards the close of the queen's reign, he wrote more than once to Cecil denouncing James himself as a treacherous ally, alleging that he secretly endeavoured to keep Ireland in sedition, and that he was in league both with the rebels and with Spain, and that all "his fair semblances to her Majesty" were but "Scottish dissimulation." It was therefore only natural that when James came to the throne the Secretary was fearful that he might lose his position. Of his colleagues in Ireland, as many as could get away hurried across the Channel, laden with all the money they could scrape together, and full of slanderous tales of each other, to bribe and lie their way into royal favour. Those who, perforce, had to remain behind, paid some friend or patron to look after their interests at Court. From the highest to the lowest, as Fenton himself admitted, they "were diligent to send out to seek the star risen in the North, and to carry myrrh and frankincense to it; everyone seeking a St. Peter to lead him to Christ." Fenton professed to Cecil that he "reposed only on him to give him way to his Majesty's good opinion and favour"; but at the same time he sent over his servant to buy the support of other powerful courtiers. His emissary managed the matter badly. According to Fenton, he sought aid from the wrong persons, and "followed the vanity of his own mind, instead of adhering closely to his instructions. In short, his mission was entirely unsuccessful.

Cecil, moreover, seems to have taken umbrage at the Irish Secretary's double-dealing. At any rate, he thought that it would be unwise to show too great favour to one who had said so many bitter things about the Scots king; and consequently he did not exert himself on his friend's behalf

when Fenton's enemies, seeing their opportunity, endeavoured to get him deposed from his office.

In writing at this time to his son-in-law, Robert Boyle, Fenton says that "had he had more of worldly means he might have . . . kept his position intact." But as he had not sufficient of "this wicked transitory trash" to bribe effectively, his traducers gained a partial victory over him. He was compelled to share his office of Secretary with Sir Richard Coke.

For some time the old man continued to address piteous appeals to Cecil to help him to regain his former position. He reminded him of his long years of faithful service. In order to disprove the charges of peculation and bribe-taking that were persistently directed against him, he sent the Minister "a true collection of all his worldly estates in England and Ireland." He said that he had "always honoured and followed Cecil with an upright heart," and besought him not to allow him "to be so unworthily overthrown, through the malice of his enemies, in his aged years." He told him that he was ready again to play his old part, and to keep Cecil and the king privately informed as to the true state of affairs in Ireland.

Fenton restored to his post. For a long time his petitions were unanswered; but in the end he received the reward of his importunity. In 1604 his office was regranted to him for life; and a few years later we find Salisbury writing to his "very loving friend" in the old intimate strain, and telling him that whatever information he should at any time impart, touching his Majesty's service, should be used in the way he desired."

Fenton's brief period of moderation. To the last, Fenton adhered to the principles he gave expression to in the *Tragical Discourses*. To the last he advocated repressive measures against the "diabolical sect of Rome." In his despatches from Ireland he laments the want of a rack in England, and advocates the torturing of Irish prisoners. Like all fanatics, he believed at heart that the end justifies the means, and we find him urging Cecil to employ "underhand means" for removing troublesome chieftains, such as Florence MacCarthy Mor. Nevertheless, there was a time when even Fenton was dimly conscious of the folly and wickedness of the English rule. We find him telling Cecil, in 1596, that the sores of

Ireland were too far gone to be cured with sharp medicines. We find him condemning "the unworthy looseness of the soldiery," and touched by "the pitiful cry of the starving people." He recognises that without "framing the Irish first to love her Majesty" and her government, it was "vain to expect that they would preserve in duty and affection." "Force," he declares, "is no remedy. It hath done no good these three years." He recommends some milder way of pacification. For the time he stands out in shining contrast to bloodthirsty ministers of the gospel, such as Loftus, Daniel, and Lyon, who were continually imploring the government to draw the sword on this rebellious and stiff-necked people who would not, in spite of fines and imprisonments, come to Protestant conventicles to hear the Word of God preached. But the improvement was only momentary. After the failure of the negotiations with Tyrone in 1597 and 1598, Fenton hardened his heart again. He was disgusted at the "arrogance" of the Irish leader in daring to ask that the people might have "liberty of conscience." He despaired of winning over such obstinate heretics and rebels by merciful measures. "Her Majesty must depend no more upon treaties and parleys, but turn her mercy to revenge."

The plot to assassinate Tyrone. To attempt to utterly extirpate the plague of treason by main force would be too great and costly an undertaking. Some newer and sharper means of striking a blow at sedition must be adopted. Fenton is convinced that the serpent must be killed in the head, then "the poison will have no further force in the limbs." In short, he recommends that Tyrone shall be assassinated and his sons kidnapped.

He persuaded Cecil to agree to his proposals; and straightway he cast about "to find an axe to strike down, at one blow, the great oak that had grown up in many years." That is to say, he sought to discover a fit occasion and suitable agents for carrying out the dastardly plot he had concocted. Tyrone's extreme popularity was a serious obstacle in its development, and the death of Cecil's father caused it to be set on one side for a time; but, in spite of many discouragements, the Secretary did not cease to urge it upon his master, until the course of events finally extinguished all hopes of its success.

Fenton and the settlement of Ulster. Fenton never again reverted to that more moderate and reasonable attitude, which once, for a brief space, he had assumed. In the closing years of his life we find him strenuously opposing Sir Arthur Chichester's earlier and more humane scheme for the settlement of Ulster. He was disgusted with the toleration and lenity of the new Lord Deputy; and he strongly objected to the granting of pardons to offenders, for by this means "the king's well-deserving servitors were robbed of their recompense." It was largely through his influence that Chichester's first proposals were set on one side, and that Ulster was treated as a conquered country, to be divided amongst the new settlers and the native Irish as seemed fit to her Majesty's representatives.

Sermons. Nevertheless, although an advocate of severe measures, Fenton did not believe in altogether neglecting to attempt to influence the people by moral suasion. He always clung to his belief in the efficacy of sermons; and though he did not, as in his younger days, usurp himself the office of the preacher, he frequently counselled Cecil to send "learned and discreet ministers" to Ireland, in the conviction that a strong regimen of Protestant harangues, tempered by a judicious use of the sword, the thumbscrew, and the rack, would prove an efficacious treatment for the maladies of that unhappy country.

Fenton's last days. To the end of his days, too, he showed himself to be the same strenuous, narrow-minded servant of the crown. The pathetic letters[1] that he addressed in his old age to Richard Boyle reveal to us his diligence, his earnestness, as well as the strength of his domestic affections. Only a year before his death we find him telling his son-in-law that "he cannot write to him at length," as he is now "so full to provide for the dangers that the time doth threaten," and asking Boyle to commend him to "good Kate," and to his little grandson, his "jewel Hodge." And so, whilst still "overpressed with business," death overtook him, at Dublin, on October 19th, 1609.

He played out to the end his *rôle* of Irish informer-in-chief; and his colleagues' thirst for vengeance did not cease even with his death. Before his body was cold they were seeking to obtain permission to search his papers.

[1] Lismore Papers, second series, ed. by A. B. Grosart.

The story of his life is not without its moral. It shows us to what depths of infamy a man may sink, who, lured on by a love of gain, deserts the calm pursuit of letters for the sordid game of politics.

V

Fenton's dual temperament. "A soldier and a long robe," a courtier and a statesman, a theologian and a man of letters, Fenton displayed to the full that vigorous versatility which was so marked a characteristic of the men of our English Renaissance. His frequent interpolations in the text of the *Tragical Discourses* throw considerable light on his personality, and reveal to us that in Fenton, as in other of his contemporaries, there was that extreme duality of temperament—of which Robert Greene afforded perhaps the most curious example—which made it possible for him to be strongly attracted at the same moment by two movements which had very little in common, and which, in their later aspects, were mutually opposed to each other.

The Renaissance and the Puritan movement. These significant additions in Fenton's first book reveal to us on the one hand a young man imbued with the spirit of the Renaissance, its restless curiosity, its admiration for "virtue," its conviction of the power and importance of the individual; they show him to be an enthusiastic student of the philosophy and literature of the old pagan world, as well as eager to learn all that he could about nature and about the men of his own day. On the other hand, we find him strongly influenced by nascent Puritanism, and already full of narrow prejudices. In the end it was the Puritan in him that triumphed. But although, when still in early middle life, he forsook humane pursuits, although as a politician he won for himself that pecuniary reward which the service of literature did not bring him, it is as a literary man that he is most widely and most honourably known. His first book, his *Tragical Discourses* has secured for him a niche in the temple of fame. The great historian of English poetry declared that of all those collections of Italian love-stories which exercised so profound an influence on the England of Elizabeth, this miscellany of his was the best in point of size and selection; and that opinion has been indorsed by many discerning critics since Warton's day.

Fenton's aim. Fenton's professed object in writing these *Tragical Discourses* was twofold. He wished to give recreation to, as well as provide instruction for, "the frail imps of his own age." He was firmly convinced, too, of the value of histories as a means of imparting moral and religious instruction to the young. "The most part of the simple and ignorant sort," he urges, "are rather moved with such examples, than reduced with the severe sentences of some great philosopher or reformed theologian." He admits that, "at the first sight," these Discourses of his "may import certain vanities or fond practices in love." Nevertheless, he does not doubt but that "he will be absolved of any vain intent" by the fair-minded, "seeing that he has rather noted diversity of examples, in sundry young men and women, approving sufficiently the inconvenience happening by the pursuit of licentious desire, than affected in any sort such uncertain follies." He does not approve of "a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary." Like Bandello, he believes, with the great Puritan poet, that men should know "the utmost that vice promises to her followers"; and that "the knowledge and survey of vice is, in this world, necessary to the constituting of human virtue." He does not, therefore, at all agree with those who would have the young "read only of the noble acts of good men." They must also have set before them "the evil doings of the wicked," and learn to trace accurately the consequences that flow from them. If such knowledge were not of value, he urges, it is inconceivable that, for so many hundred years, in all common states, as well heathen as christened, would have been permitted the reading of sundry Poets, whose comedies and tragedies import a description figurative of the wicked lives of all degrees of men and women; without intent to persuade any imitation that way, but rather to provoke the multitude, by familiar trains, to avoid such conditions as they saw justly reprehended in others." "Doth not Scripture itself," says he, "note us unto the lives of sundry vicious persons"; to the end that, "in viewing the strange and grievous punishment which ordinarily hath overwhelmed such sin," we may "learn and labour to direct our lives by the contrary of their examples"? Thus does Fenton anticipate the arguments of the *Areopagitica*. With Milton he holds that without the knowledge of evil there can

be "no wisdom to choose, no continuance to forbear." With Milton he maintains that he that can apprehend and consider vice, with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian."

Ascham's attack. In spite of his high professions, and the cogency of his reasoning, Fenton's book did not escape censure at the hands of the more scrupulous sort. Not many months after the publication of the *Tragical Discourses*, Roger Ascham, in his *Schoolmaster*, made a violent attack upon those "Italianated" Englishmen that brought to their native country "the enchantments of Circes." He was particularly violent in his censure of those who had translated, and published at home, the *novelle* of Italy. "Of these ungratious books," he says, "many have been set in print within these few months," and "are now sold in every shop in London."[1] They are "commended," he adds, "by honest titles the sooner to corrupt honest manners"; and "dedicated over boldly to virtuous and honourable personages, the easier to beguile simple and innocent wits." But, in spite of their fair semblances, they "allure young wills and wits to wantons," and "teach old bawds new school points."

A Papist plot. Ascham was convinced, moreover, that the translation and circulation of such literature in England was part of a Romish plot "to corrupt honest living and subvert true religion." "When the busy and open Papists abroad," he says, "could not, by their contentious books, turn men in England fast enough from truth and right judgment in doctrine, then the subtle and secret Papists at home, procured bawdy books to be translated out of the Italian tongue, whereby over many young wills do now boldly contemn all severe books that sound to honesty and godliness."

Fenton the chief object of Ascham's attack. That it was against Fenton that Ascham's attack was mainly directed

[1] *Ascham*, "The Schoolmaster," London, 1570, book I. *See* Arber's "Reprint," London, 1870, pp. 78, 79, *et seq.* Jusserand ("The English Novel," etc., pp. 74-76), strangely enough, includes the "Cortegiano" amongst the Italian books at which Ascham's strictures were aimed; when, as a matter of fact, the author of "The Schoolmaster" held Castiglione's book in the highest esteem. This "book," he said, "advisedly read, and diligently followed but one year at home in England, would do a young gentleman more good, I wiss, than three years' travel abroad spent in Italy."

there can be but little doubt. It was Fenton who, Puritan and theology-monger though he was, had ventured to suggest that the young and ignorant were not likely to be easily moved by "the severe sentences of a reformed theologian." He had dared, too, to dedicate his "fond book" to a virtuous and honourable personage, for whom Ascham himself had a high regard. It was Fenton's book that was then being "sold in every shop in London." Beside the *Tragical Discourses* but one other collection of Italian stories that we know of had been published in England—the first volume of Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*.

That a man of sense and intelligence, as Ascham undoubtedly was, should have conceived such suspicions of so staunch a young Protestant as Fenton, only shows what strange hallucinations a mind ordinarily well-balanced may become the prey to when it is infected by the *odium theologicum*. Just as in a later day many excellent people, of quite average shrewdness, were wont to regard any movement, political, social, or religious, which they did not understand, or which they disliked, as the work of "Jesuits in disguise," so Ascham was ready to trace the handiwork of "Secret Papists" in any book which was not to his palate. Papistry! the very word roused him like a trumpet. The mere sound of it filled him with fury of battle, and made him forget all reason, justice, and fairness. In his blind rage mistaking friend for foe, he rained wild blows on members of his own party; and, madder than that valiant knight of La Mancha, he tilted at one of the strong positions of the army whose champion he was. It was Ascham, not Fenton, who sought to subvert Protestant principles. It was Ascham, not Fenton, who endeavoured to bring Papist practices into England. It was Fenton, not Ascham, who was the more consistent Protestant of the two.

Ascham's inconsistency. "The Bible, and the Bible only," said Chillingworth, "is the religion of Protestants." And in writing his book the young Fenton, as a pious Protestant, strictly adhered to Biblical methods of imparting moral instruction. "The Bible itself," as Milton said, "ofttimes relates blasphemy not nicely," and "describes the carnal sense of wicked men not inelegantly." The Book, in fact, is full of earthly stories, to which the faithful attach some heavenly meaning; and some of the tales to be found

in the Hebrew scriptures are of exactly the same type as those of which Fenton's collection is composed. Therein are to be found the "Tragical Discourses" of Amnon and Tamar, of David and Bathsheba, of Dinah and Shechem, of the villainy of the men of Gibeah. Therein, too, are to be found such "pleasant and profitable comedies" as those of Boaz and Ruth, of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, of the Shulamite and her royal lover. From all these tales the devout Protestant draws profitable moral lessons. It was Ascham and his co-religionists who held that it was right and fitting that such histories should be read by young and old alike. "An open Bible," was one of the rallying cries of the faction to which he belonged. And Ascham, in seeking to put down Fenton's book, could not but be regarded, by any consistent Protestant, as one of those "fools who would teach men to read more decently than God thought good to write."

Ascham an advocate of Papish practices. Moreover, in advocating the licensing of books, and in exhorting the licensers to rigour, Ascham himself was endeavouring to promote "Papish" practices in England. For, as Milton shows us, it was the "Papists" who were the inventors of licensing, or rather who were the first to suppress not only such books as contained heretical opinions, but also such as they conceived to be likely to conduce to immorality. Protestantism held, on the other hand, that "to the pure all things are pure," "not only meats and drinks, but all kinds of knowledge, whether of good or evil." And the Spirit of Protestantism might be represented as saying to the faithful those words which, according to Dionysius Alexandrinus, God spoke to him in a vision :—"Read any books whatever come to thy hands; for thou art sufficient both to judge aright and to examine each matter."

Fenton an earnest and consistent Protestant. Had Ascham examined carefully the *Tragical Discourses*, he would have no doubt become convinced of the orthodoxy of its author. It is clear, however, that like certain inquisiturient schoolmasters of our own day, he did not take the trouble to read the book which he condemned. Fenton, in fact, throughout his whole career, at first with the pen, and afterwards with the sword, was an earnest and consistent champion of the Protestant cause. His strong bias is abundantly displayed in the passages which he has interpolated in the text of this

his first work. "The Bible," he says, "is the infallible book; and its study ought to be the only exercise of those that are clad in the habit of religion." He never misses any opportunity for inserting a tirade against "the Babylonian or diabolical sect of Rome," and is perpetually abusing the Pope and the Catholic clergy. "Abbey men," he says, "carry the devil in the cowl of their hoods." He thanks God that the realm of England is now "happily purged of such filth, and replenished with a plentiful crew of the undoubted ministers of God's Word."

The Puritan conception of woman's proper position. But in nothing does he show more clearly his Puritan prejudices than in his frequent pronouncements on such subjects as the position of woman, the government of wives, and the education of children. Like many Englishmen who have held the same creed, he is pestilently didactic and oracular, especially when treating of topics of this class. After the fashion of the Puritan pamphleteers of the following age, he is for ever discoursing on the inconstancy of women, their wantonness, their proneness to folly. He is continually seeking to convince married men of the importance of "keeping a tight rein upon this kind of cattle," and of seeing that their wives "abide continually in awe of them." "For," says he, "if they get once the bit between their teeth, and crop of the herb of riotous will, it is harder to reclaim them, either by awe, fear, compulsion, or gentle entreaty, than the wild haggard, or rammish falcon, by any cunning or device of their keeper." "Women," he declares, "have their being in this world for no other respect than to depend upon the will of men." They are "derived from the imperfection of men," and "ordained from the beginning to be their vassals." Hence, in Fenton's opinion, "the chiefest virtue in a woman is to be obedient to her husband, and to be continually under the yoke of his awe." If any wife should fail in this respect, her lord has the remedy in his own hands. He must "show himself worthy of the authority given him by God and nature in exposing the rod of correction." Fenton, in fact, like other of his co-religionists, is a most conscientious wife-beater, and strongly disapproves of the leniency of Italian husbands. "He that dwelleth with his wife according to knowledge," says a representative divine of that school, "endeavoureth to beat the fear of God into her head, if she be not obedient, and

helpful unto him, that thereby she may be compelled to learn her duty and do it." Fenton, like John Rogers, had a most profound belief in the efficacy of this means of correcting the waywardness of the "sex feminine." He held that this severe treatment should commence whilst the "flickering creatures" were still in their infancy. "These imps," he says, "have folly tied on their backs. They be more apt to decline than any other creature." Therefore the "tutors of little girls must not forget to offer them the rack and torments of the rod; which you must minister unto them in the greenness of their years, and afore the tenderness of youth, with want of discretion, will suffer them to discern their own inclination." Next to the "rod of correction," he regards incessant toil as the best prophylactic against the many moral maladies with which vain woman so easily becomes infected. "Women," he says, "ought to keep their bodies accompanied with continual travail." As a "recreation," he regards "the use of the needle" as the most suitable for women. "Dancing," and suchlike "fond practices," he declares to be "disciplines devised within the school of Satan." It is true that in making this last pronouncement he is but translating the words of Belleforest: nevertheless we may regard it as representing his own views on the matter, as he never scruples to alter or omit any statement of the French writer with which he does not agree.

Fenton as an artist. But fond as Fenton is of usurping the office of a preacher, his interpolations in the text of the *Discourses* do not wholly, or even mainly, consist of Puritan dogmatisings. By carefully collating his translations with the same stories as told by Belleforest, we find many additions of a very different order. Inveterate moraliser though he was, he was also an artist, and had in no small measure certain great artistic qualities. His book has neither the vices nor the virtues of the average modern translation. He was not scrupulously accurate, nor did he attempt in any way to represent in English the style of the original writer; but his work has a strength and freedom which no ordinary translation possesses.

In him "the imaginative reason" is continually active. He does not only, like some Elizabethan translators, embroider the text with precious phrases and epithets. He does not merely add, here and there, some curious simile, some allusion

to classical history or mythology. He realises each story for himself, and tells it in his own way ; and in the very texture of the narrative he introduces sensuous touches which reveal to us how much more he was than a translator. In narrating, for instance, the history of Julia (the Eighth Tale), that pathetic story which Bandello had, no doubt, first heard from the gracious lips of his friend Castiglione, he tells us that, in the course of the dance, the gallant of Ferrara " failed not to grasp the hand " of the girl " as often as he durst." In his description of the final scene of the tragedy, too, Fenton adds to its effectiveness by representing Julia as kissing her sister before she throws herself into the Oglio. Again, in that very tragical history of " A young lady in Milan " (the Third Tale), the whole of the passage relating to the first secret meeting of Pandora and Parthenope is full of added incident. The lady, for example, forgets not " to seal the bargain " " with sundry sorts of kisses, and other homely tricks of familiarity." The knight, too, fails not " humbly to honour " " her bare breasts " " with the often print of his mouth." There are several similar additions in the amusing account of the " perils happening to a young gentleman of Milan in the pursuit of his lady " (the Fifth Tale). This austere young Puritan, also, describes with more fulness of detail than either Bandello or Belleforest the legerdemains used at Pavia by that " fair soldier of Venus," the Countess of Celant (the Seventh Tale). To each story, in fact, he imparts some of the fire and freshness of an original work.

Fenton's vocabulary. Fenton's vocabulary is very copious, and he boldly makes use of words gathered from all kinds of sources. We find in the *Tragical Discourses* many words borrowed from French and Italian, as well as from Greek and Latin. Some of these, such as " catarrh," " calibre," " symptom," " catalogue," " anatomy," ultimately came into common use. Others, such as " limitrophal," " escarfion," " dariolette," " tintamarre," " denier," " bourreau," " sympathy " (in the Italian sense of the word), and " marmotte " were never Anglicised. The word " colcarrier " (messenger), which he adapted from the French, and which he uses several times, is only to be found, I believe, in this book. It was owing no doubt to the influence of the Pleiad that he introduced into his text several Greek words, such as " polylogos," " diabolos," and " dermopterae."

In the *Tragical Discourses* there are many expressive words which have now become obsolete. Amongst words of this class are "ell," "jonking," "huishing," "curtal," "pavise," "nestcockle," "diamantine," and "mock-holiday."

A euphuist before Euphues. Fenton painted from a full palette. He handled, too, his material, for the most part, with considerable force and sincerity. Nevertheless, there are passages here and there in his work in which he employs those *précieuses* mannerisms which ultimately became so popular amongst the prose writers of Elizabeth's Court. And though he was much more moderate in his use of such affectations than was Lyly or even Gascoigne, he must be regarded as one of the founders of euphuism—a euphuist before Euphues.

Fenton and Guevara. Some modern critics have represented Antonio de Guevara as the originator of this *mode* of expression. But whilst there can be little doubt that the Spanish writer's *El Relox de Principes* played an important part in the gradual evolution of this style, there were other influences at work scarcely less potent. Euphuism, in fact, was merely one phase of a movement which had its adherents in France and in Italy as well as in Spain and in England, and the origin of which cannot be traced to any one course. Fenton, it is true, was already a student of Guevara when he wrote the *Tragical Discourses*, and but a short time after its publication he produced his *Golden Epistles*, which consisted largely of passages translated from the Spaniard's great work; but in the formation of his style he was as much influenced by Belleforest and other prose writers of the Pleiad as by the Bishop of Guadix.

The marks of euphuism. In Fenton's book are to be found all the characteristics of euphuism—elaborate antithesis, alternate alliteration, the frequent employment of the rhetorical question, and an extravagant use of metaphors largely borrowed from natural history. Alliteration, indeed, was a very common trick amongst writers of that time—even plain, unaffected Roger Ascham makes constant use of it; but *transverse* alliteration is a distinguishing mark of euphuism, and examples of this peculiar mannerism are not uncommon in Fenton's prose. He alludes, for example, to

the sex feminine as "that flattering crew of flickering creatures." He asserts that Pandora was "drowned in the filthy desire of the flesh." Again, his use of metaphor is peculiarly euphuistic. He makes frequent allusion to "herbs or beasts which Ind or Afric hold." He speaks, for instance, of the chameleon which is "nourished by the breath of the air." He tells us of "the loving rage of the she-ape towards her young ones." He describes, too, very prettily, the dying swan. "The nearer," he says, "she draweth to the end of her destiny, the pleasanter note she sings, bathing and pruning herself in the purest stream she can find, to the end to do honour to her funeral fate." We are also introduced to the "salamander," the "basilisk" or cockatrice, the scorpion, the elephant, the tiger and the leopard. It is true that many of the animals in this curious collection are to be found in Belleforest, but Fenton certainly makes a more frequent use of such similes than the French writer. In seeking to prove, for example, that some women are reformed rather "by fair entreaty" than "by fear or force of torments," he interpolates the following passage:—"The fierce elephant stands not in awe of his keeper by force of any stripes, but is made tractable to bend his large body whilst he mounts upon his back, by certain familiar voices and strokings of his keeper, wherewith he overcometh the natural rudeness and cruelty of the beast. The tiger will take food at the hands of the wildman, nourished in the caves and desert habitations amongst them, where no stripes nor other awe of man can move any moderation to his woodness or cruel nature." On the very same page, too, he introduces an allusion "to the stone of Scilicia, upon whom the more you beat to bruise or break it in pieces, the greater hardness is driven into it."

Fenton, however, frequently forgets all such mannerisms, and writes with great simplicity and directness. In the second *Discourse*, for example, that dialogue between Cornelia and Camilla, in which the former reveals to her friend the secret of Livio's solitary mode of life, is remarkable for its point and briskness. The story of Cornelio and Plaudina (the Fifth Tale) contains more than one excellent narrative passage.[1] Very picturesque, too, is Fenton's description of Finea's visit to the witches. "Descending," he says, "into the vale of Camonica," she "gat, by the help of those sprites and limbs

[1] pp. 242-243, 248-251.

of the devil inhabiting that hellish island, certain flowers gathered in the wane of the moon, with drugs and other trumpery of witchcraft, requisite for conjurers and such as occupy the pernicious trade of enchanting." And how beautiful is his description of death!—"And as soon as we have taken possession of the house of rest, he shutteth the gates of all annoy against us, feeding us, as it were, with a sweet slumber or pleasant sleep, until the last summons of general resurrection."

It was not Fenton's part, as it was of some translators in that age, only to serve as a conduit to convey to his own land some portion of those fertilising streams which, in our tardy English springtime, caused the seeds of genius to spring up and bear fruit. Nor did he merely reflect, as a mirror, some of the light and warmth of Italy. His work had, as has been said, its own specific artistic virtues. His was an interesting personality, and he had in no small measure the power of expression himself. It is curious, therefore, that his book has been so much overlooked of late; for it certainly deserves to be read, not merely by students of the sources of our dramatic literature, but also by all those who are interested in the evolution of English prose style; as well as by that larger class who delight to read old tales of passion, stories of "loving ladies' hapless haps, their deaths, and deadly cares."

R. L. DOUGLAS.

CERTAIN
TRAGICAL DISCOURSES

WRITTEN OUT OF FRENCH AND LATIN

BY GEOFFREY FENTON

NO LESS PROFITABLE THAN PLEASANT,
AND OF LIKE NECESSITY TO ALL DEGREES
THAT TAKE PLEASURE IN ANTIQUITIES
OR FOREIGN REPORTS

Mon heur viendra

1567

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND VIRTUOUS LADY,

THE LADY MARY SIDNEY,

GEOFFREY FENTON wisheth a happy increase of honour and years of this life.

NICEPHORUS, an historiographer of great credit amongst the Greeks, affirmeth, that as every knowledge of itself deserveth commendation, so the discipline of histories is most agreeable and necessary for all ages: which the Roman orator Marcus Cicero full well approveth, in commending the study thereof to all degrees and times as an exercise of most necessity and honour: for that, saith he, in them is represented, as it were, an image or portrait of all things that have passed since the beginning of the world, together with diversity of instructions to all sorts of people touching their direction in future chances, even until the last and extreme dissolution of the same; not doubting also in his first book, *De Oratore*, to add certain peculiar titles, calling an history "testis temporis, lux veritatis, vita memoriæ, magistra vitæ, et nuntia vetustatis." "For if a man be young," saith he, "the reading thereof will make him old, not in years, which the most part could be content to shift of and forgo, but in experience and wisdom." And if he be already loaded with the heavy burden of nature, what a pleasure it is then to behold the things which either he hath passed in youth, or long before his time were put in practice. Whereof, as the first is very well proved by Euripides the poet saying that the remembrance of the pain that is past is sweet; so the opinion of Tully, touching the other, persuades a great necessity to all degrees to be privy to the commodity of stories. "For," saith he, "to be ignorant in things happened ere thou wast born, is as much to say as thou wilt be always a child."

There is required in all estates both a faith and a fear in God, and also an outward policy in worldly things: whereof, according to the philosophers, the one is to be learned by

perusing the Scripture, and the other cannot be gotten but by the assistance of histories, which are the only and true tables whereon are drawn in perfect colour the virtues and vices of every condition of man, both their flourishing time, whilst they embraced the first, and miserable fall when they grew in delight with the wickedness of the last. If a man be a magistrate, or bear authority in public affairs, what labour is better bestowed than in searching the acts of such as have supplied equal dignity and place, to accommodate himself to their virtues? And, to the private person, antiquity gives choice of admonitions for obedience to his superiors, with charge to apply and employ all his care for the commodity of his country. If he be a citizen, he shall there find what belongeth to his proper office, either in the service of his public weal or in his peculiar affairs at home. And to a woman, what store of examples are there to instruct her in her duty, either for the married to keep her faith to her husband, with Lucretia, or the unmarried to defend her virginity, with Virginia. Finally, that excellent treasure and full library of all knowledge yields us freely precedents for all cases that may happen; both for imitation of the good, detesting the wicked, avoiding a present mischief, and preventing any evil before it fall.

Wherein also, as in every act there be certain special principles and rules for the direction of such as search out their disposition, so histories do swarm with examples of all kind of virtues, wherein both the dignity of virtue and foulness of vice appeareth much more lively than in any moral teaching; seeing therein is figured under certain forms and shapes of men and their doings past, all and every such diversity and change, which philosophy doth teach by way of precepts. Like as also, touching the commodities to be culled out of antiquities, Livy is of opinion that the pleasure and profit falleth out of indifferent value to such as bestow their time, with upright judgment, in the view of ancient records; for, saith he, "nihil est aptius ad delectationem lectoris, quam temporum varietates fortunaeque vicissitudines cognoscere, quae etsi exoptabilia in experiendo non fuerunt, tamen in legendo sunt jucunda." And the fruit and chief gain derived of such travail is in that we shall see set forth good and wholesome lessons of all sorts, whereof we may take to ourselves and benefit of our country such as we like to follow; and

which presents unto us the true picture and report of such enterprises as had both sinister beginnings and much worse ends.

And yet is it not sufficient for us to judge that the only fruit consists in reading the noble acts of good men, seeing that (of the contrary) to those that study to resemble their virtues the eschewing of the evil parts in a number of vicious persons is a singular commodity: which, if it were not so, the continuance of so many hundred years in all common states, as well heathen as Christened, had not permitted the reading of sundry Poets, whose comedies and tragedies import a description figurative of the wicked lives of all degrees of men and women; without intent to persuade any imitation that way, but rather to provoke the multitude, by familiar trains, to avoid such conditions as they saw justly reprehended in others. And truly with better reason may a man put to the view of the world any ancient report whose profession is to declare a truth, than to prefer the feigned tales of poets, which yet we see for diverse good respects tolerated to be read in all ages. For like as in a family or ancient house, he who hath been most renowned of all the stock leaveth a precedent and desire to his posterity to resemble his doings, as a glass and mirror to them of most excellent virtues; so, when his stories are published to the common profit of all men, everyone goeth about to confirm himself to the virtuous conversation and life of such as excelled amongst the elders.

Wherein meseemeth, Nicephorus said very well that those which write Histories and keep not that which is profitable and praiseworthy as it were in their store-house at home, but rather, being beneficial to the commonwealth, do expose so common a profit to the general commodity of all men, are (as it were) the executors of God's divine providence; because they comprise and pack up in one work or volume, as in a common treasure, sundry sorts of noble deeds, without inhibition or let to any degree to resort thereunto and learn, by other men's misdeeds, to direct better his own doings, and not with the exchange of the world to alter also his mind, but rather, as much as lieth in him, to imitate the life and conversation of them who have lived well before. Wherein, seeing in this world the nature of man in all ages, although the single persons be changed, remaineth still one; so, also, the good fortunes, felicities, calamities, and miseries, which

happen both in public government and to every private state, turn always to one effect and are like those of times past; so that, by the benefit of stories, presenting afore our eyes a true calendar of things of ancient date, by the commendation of virtuous and valiant persons and acts, we be drawn by desire to tread the steps of their renown. And on the other side, considering the sinister fortune and horrible cases which have happened to certain miserable souls, we behold both the extreme points whereunto the frail condition of man is subject by infirmity; and also are thereby taught, by view of other men's harms, to eschew the like inconveniences in ourselves.

Wherein, Right Honourable, like as I have rather touched slightly than used terms of commendation at large, according to the worthiness of so precious a jewel as the knowledge of histories—for that nowadays every man's mouth is open to commend the fruit distilling from so flourishing a vine—so, for my part, being more forward than able to discharge my zeal in that behalf, I have bestowed some of my void hours, whilst I was in the other sides the Sea, in forcing certain Tragical Discourses out of their French terms into our English phrase, presuming to commend unto your Ladyship the fruits and effect of my travail; following therein the order of such as have spent time in the like study, who are wont to declare their good-will, by bestowing their labours. Wherewith, being unhappily denied other friendship of fortune to make good my desire in giving an unfeigned show of the duty and service I owe you and the house whereof you took your beginning, I am here, upon terms of humility, for preferment of this rude and simple dedication of these foreign reports to your honour.

To whose virtues, as I have chiefly respected to give due renown, by preferring a true portrait of your conversation and life in the virtues, gifts and ornaments of the noble Angelica, chaste Parolina, constant Julia, and renowned Carmosina, with others, whose integrity of life hath given them a crown of immortality with a glorious remembrance of their names for ever after their death; so my second endeavour was bent to observe the necessity of the time; chiefly for that, upon the view and examples of our ancestors' lives, the frail imps of this age may find cause of shame in their own abuses, with desire to exchange their bad condition and order of living with the study and desire to imitate the virtue of their

predecessors, whose life and renown after death argueth the undoubted reward attending (as a thing of course) the virtuous and well-disposed ; whereof, the contrary, appear wonderful torments and sharp penance provided to plague the abominable and vicious liver.

Besides, it is a principle and chief rule in our nature and disposition to be rather instructed by examples of familiar authorities than reformed by severity of laws ; for that the one seems to govern us by awe and commandment, and in the other appears a consent of our fancy, marching always according to the direction of our own wills. For which cause, the historians of old time (in their several records of the acts, conquests, and noble attempts of princes and great men) have left out nothing serving for the ornament and institution of man's life ; not forgetting to set out also in natural colours their tyranny and other vices, with contempt of virtue, if their lives were found guilty in any such offence. But when they paint out a good king, a magistrate without touch of partial or covetous mind, a courtier loyal and without dissimulation, a minister of the Church, not smelling of hypocrisy, but searching purely the honour of God, a lady chaste, honest, courteous, a lover of charity, using a devout reverence to God and fear to His laws—it is then that they allure, by trains of familiarity, every succession to embrace and behold, as in a glass, the undoubted means that is able, and will, bring them to the like perfection in virtue.

Which, also, moved me to use a special discretion in culling out such examples as best agreed with the condition of the time, and also were of most fresh and familiar memory ; to the end that, with the delight in reading my dedication, I may also leave, to all degrees, an appetite and honest desire to honour virtue and hold vice in due detestation. And, albeit, at the first sight, these discourses may import certain vanities or fond practices in love, yet I doubt not to be absolved of such intent by the judgment of the indifferent sort, seeing I have rather noted diversity of examples in sundry young men and women, approving sufficiently the inconvenience happening by the pursuit of licentious desire, than affected in any sort such uncertain follies.

For here may be seen such patterns of chastity, and maids so assured and constant in virtue, that they have not doubted rather to repose a felicity in the extreme pangs of death than

to fall by any violent force into the danger of the fleshly enemy to their honour. In like sort appeareth here an experience of wonderful virtues in men ; who, albeit had power to use and command the thing they chiefly desired, yet, bridling with main hand the humour of their inordinate lust, vanquished all motions of sensuality, and became masters of themselves, by abstaining from that whereunto they felt provocation by nature. Who desireth to see the folly of a foolish lover, passioning himself upon credit, the impudence of a maid, or other woman, renouncing the vow of her faith or honour due to virginity, the sharp penance attending the rash choice of great ladies in seeking to match in any sort with degrees of inferior condition ; or who wisheth to be privy to the inconveniences in love, how he frieth in the flame of the first affection, and after, groweth not only cold of himself, but is easily converted into a contrary shape and disposition of deadly hate—may be here assisted with more than double experience touching all those evils.

The courtesy of an enemy on the behalf of his adversary, with a wonderful liberality in the other in returning the benefit received, is here set forth in such lively colours, that there seems to lack nothing for the ornament and decoration of such a work. And who takes pleasure to behold the fits and pangs of a frantic man, incensed to sinister conceits by the suggestion of fretting jealousy, forcing him to effects of absolute desperation ; the due plague of disloyalty in both kinds, with the glory of him who marcheth under the ensign of a contrary virtue ; a man of the church, of dissolute living, punished with public reproach ; or the villainy of the greedy usurer, making no conscience to prefer open perjury in suppressing the innocent cause—may here find to satisfy his longing at full.

Neither do I think that our English records are able to yield at this day a *Romant* more delicate and chaste, treating of the very themes and effects of love, than these histories, of no less credit than sufficient authority, by reason the most of them were within the compass of memory. Wherein, as I, with the torments that pinched here such as laboured in a passion of folly and fond desire, may work a terror to all those that hereafter unhappily sip of the cup of such raging infection, so, touching the commendable parts of any lady or woman of meaner condition mentioned in this volume of discourses, I

find them far too light to keep weight with the balance wherein are raised the qualities of your honour; which seem to have a certain affinity and resemblance with such as were the very virtue and causes of commendation, in any that ever deserved the title of "most perfect," or "justly renowned."

For if ever the Queen of Caria was meritorious for her magnanimity and bountiful disposition, the Queen of Sheba —whom some writers call Nicaula, and others Manqueda— was had in honour for her wisdom (which was such that both the Old and New Testament affirm that she travelled from the end of the world and extreme confines of the land of Judah, to come and hear the doctrine of Solomon, with whom she disputed no less learnedly than with profound judgment), or if the constant Lady Blandina, a Christian born in the heart of Europe, hath purchased a crown of eternity in keeping her faith and vow to God and the world, even to the last separation of her soul and body; or, if any other, either of antiquity or familiar experience, of what degree and condition soever, have been noted of renown for the gift of nobility in any sort— your Ladyship may boldly challenge place with the best; either for moderate government, whose effects in all things you attempt argue your worthy participation with the excellent gifts of temperance and wonderful modesty in the two most famous Earls of Leicester and Warwick, your brothers, and most virtuous and renowned Lady, the Countess of Huntingdon, your sister; to whose glory and general love amongst all sorts of people in this land, I need not add further circumstance or increase of praise, considering the whole state, fixing their eyes upon them, with an unfeigned zeal and admiration of their wisdom and virtues, do avouch in more ample sort their good-will that way than I am either worthy or able to declare; and for your clemency to the case of the afflicted, upright dealing without exaction or cause of grudge to any, wonderful respect to the honour of your calling, with dutiful awe and fear of God, and obedience to my Lord your husband, or other arguments or effects wherein consists the praise of a virtuous mind, or ought to appear the fruits of true nobility—they make you not so much honoured in your country, as embraced of strangers who never saw nor knew you but by name; who also doubt not to make your sincere and devout order of living a looking-glass to behold and follow

your virtues, and by your order of doing to draw the plot and foundation of their own life.

Which shall suffice for this time, good madam, for the commendation of that which is sufficiently perfect of itself, and so generally honoured of all degrees that it need not the assistance of any peculiar praise; humbly craving, for my part, a privilege of favour at your hands, so far forth as it may be lawful for me to lay these first-fruits of my travail upon the altar already garnished with other oblations of your everlasting glory, as a remembrance of an humble sacrifice which I make of my little labour and continual service vowed to your Ladyship, so long as God and nature will allow my abode in this miserable vale.

At my chamber at Paris, xxii Junii, 1567.

Your Ladyship's to command,

GEOFFREY FENTON.

SIR JOHN CONWAY, KNIGHT,

To the readers, in praise of the translator.

Like as the slender bee, by travail in her kind,
Collects her fruit, the sugared sap whereof we daily find,
So here my learned friend, in nature like the bee,
Hath linked his labour to his art and yields the fruit to thee.
In tongue estranged from us, whilst this succeeding work
(As doth the honey in the flower) by covert means did lurk,
He, labouring with effect, hath, by his learned pain,
Enforced a Frenchman tell his tale in English language plain.
Not for himself, thou knowest, it answered his delight,
By skill to understand the tale as did the author write,
But, toiling for thy sake, hath formed his hive full fine.
Take thou the comb : the pain was his : the honey shall be thine.
Good reader, yet beware, lest spider-like thou take,
By cankered kind, a spiteful sting, whence he did honey make.
Let not, in lieu of pain, a tongue complete with spite
Attempt to harm (though power shall want) the thing that he doth write :
For if thou dost, the wise will feel thy festered kind ;
And he to whom thou dost such wrong shall so thy nature find.
No doubt our days are such as every man can see,
And can at ease and will perceive the spider from the bee.
Allow his labour, then, and work that well is done,
And thou shalt see the golden race his muse pretends to run.
Let Zoilus suck the teat that Envy holds in hell,
And say with me, " God speed the pen that hath begun so well."
Thus hath he his desire. Thus shalt thou live in rest.
Thus shall his friends have, at thy hands, the sum of their request.

JOHN CONWAY.

Amici cuiusdam, ad Authorem Carmen Hexametrum

Floruit antiquo Galfridus tempore Chaucer
Scripsit et eximio permagna volumina versu :
Et multi viguere viri, quos unica virtus
Nefandos facile effecit tolerare labores.
Vixerunt : et sola manet, nunc fama Sepultis.
At tua nunc primum, Galfride, virescere virtus
Incipit, et teneras cum spe producere plantas :
Quæ, scio, quam primum radices cœperit altos,
Efferet egregios, cum magno fœnore, fructus.
Ergo quisquis erit, qui forte revolverit ista,
(Cuius mens livore nequit nec amore moveri,
Et sapit) haud dubito quin te dignabitur illa
Laude, tuo quam tu magno sudore parasti.
Sin minus : hoc uno tibi sat, Fentone, tulisti,
Quod Domina est cui des, dono dignissima tanto.

Tuus M.H.

GEORGE TURBERVILLE

in praise of the translator of this book.

If handy craftsmen have great praise for working well
By toiling trade the trifling wares which they for money sell,
Then why should Fenton fear to purchase praise of men,
To whom he frankly gives the gift of this his pleasant pen?
If he his busy brow have beat for our avail,
And for our pleasure taken pains, why should his guerdon fail?
No greedy golden fee, no gem or jewel brave,
But, of the reader, good report, this writer longs to have.
No man of meanest wit, no beast of slender brain,
That thinks that such a volume great is wrought with slender pain.
The thing itself declares what toil he undertook,
Ere Fenton's curious file could frame this passing pleasant book.
The French to English phrase, his mother language, he,
The dark to light, the shade to sun, hath brought, as you may see.
The learned stories erst, and sugared tales that lay
Removed from simple common sense, this writer doth display.
And what, before he took his painful quill to write,
Did lurk unknown, is plainly now to be discerned in sight.
Now men of meanest skill, what Bandel wrought, may view,
And tell the tale in English well that erst they never knew,
Discourse of sundry strange and tragical affairs,
Of loving ladies' hapless haps, their deaths, and deadly cares;
And divers things beside, whereby to flee the dart
Of vile deceitful Cupid's bow, that wounds the lover's heart.
Since this by Fenton's means and travail thou dost gain,
Good reader, yield him earnèd praise and thanks for taken pain.
Then I that made this verse shall think as well of thee
As Fenton's work doth well deserve accounted of to be.

PETER BEVERLEY

in praise of the translator.

Rife is the rule that blames the idle mind,
The ground as great that blazeth travail's gain :
Each tongue can tell a world of vice's kind,
And sacred lines appoint offence's pain :
But Fenton shows, in sweet and sugared style,
What pleasant bait doth each estate beguile.

What careless youth that sees the toiling ant,
But shames to wear his golden time in vain ;
Whose tender limbs in summer-time do haunt
The fruitful fields, to rest in Borias' reign ;
When she doth suck the sweet of harvest toil,
And finds, in frost, relief in drièd soil.

The slender store that some do now possess
Whose idle bones did loathe in youth the load,
To those that live sufficeth to express,
The loitering child in age knows no abode ;
But as the ship tossed with the billow great
So he doth yield himself to fortune's threat.

What pride deserves, what is black hatred's hire,
What envy, theft, what is the miser's meed,
In fine, what foul offence, what fact so dire,
But scripture shows his rights if thou list read,
Whereby each may both shun the vilest sin
And learn such life as lasting joy doth win.

But Fenton's frame hath wov'n another web,
His painful pen hath dyed a stranger hue.
He tells when wit is in his lowest ebb,
And warns to shun the bane that comes by view ;
Which so doth change the sense of every wight
That from a man to beast it turns him quite.

As when the mind, through want of reason's reign,
Unbridled yields to fond affection's force,
And feeding still the heart with amours vain,
Converts each part unto a senseless corse,
Wherein he lives, so odd from right and law
As mountain bear that preys devoid of awe.

And subject thus unto sweet folly's lore,
If wish he win, he shows what sour sweet
The patient sucks, what bitter bliss in store
He heaps, when age with judgment just shall mete,
When prose shall say: of all, unhappiest wight!
That reapest care in lieu of hoped delight.

But if disdain shall quit him with despite,
And yield him loath for long desired grace,
Then stabbing glaive the desperate breast must smite,
Or frantic-wise run out a savage race.
Thus if of glad or sad he hap the gain,
Both have this end: in love naught is but vain.

Which reckless race to bring in wisdom's guide,
And for to reign with bit of better skill,
My painful friend did this discourse provide,
As brake to break affection's lawless will.
Give Fenton then but fruits of his desert,
And gather thou that best may please thy heart.

P.B.

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FIRST TALE

ANSELMO AND ANGELICA

THE ARGUMENT

I MEAN not here to increase the marvel of men with a particular description of the sumptuous buildings of princes, the magnifical sites and situations of great men's houses, nor restore to memory the wonderful policies and artificial devices of our ancestors, in making plots, and firm foundations of castles and cities, in the bottom of the sea ; and much less trouble you with a report of their ingenious travail in casting down hills and making craggy mountains flat with the face of the earth, or forcing stony rocks, with places heretofore impassable, to open and make way to their huge armies. But I have in present intent to discover unto you the marvellous effects of love ; which, exceeding the opinion of common things, seems more strange than the curious construction and frame of any palace for necessity or pleasure, theatre, or place of solace, builded by art or industry of man, or other stately court (what square, quadrant, or triangle form soever it contains), or other mystical work, yielding cause of wonder to the university of the earth—seeing that a mortal grudge, grounded upon great spite, confirmed with the continuance of a long time, and pursued extremely with bloody persecution and unnatural cruelty, is not only converted upon a sudden into perfect friendship but also, by an effect and operation of love, made so indissoluble that no future accident or sinister device of enemies could once make a breach, and much less utterly dissolve, the league of amity so happily begun and surely knit together by the virtue of affection which we call commonly the passion procured by love.

Whereunto is also added a like effect of a thankful mind, arguing unto us (with a familiar example) that as ingratitude is the greatest vice that reigns in this disposition of man, and principal enemy to the honour of nobility, so the contrary deserveth by justice the title of the most precious virtue that is. Wherein, as the Thebans were shamefully reproached for the respect of their great Captains Epaminondas and

Pelopidas, so the Plateans (on the contrary) were worthily renowned for the large recompense and consideration they used, to the benefit of the Greeks who delivered them from the servitude of the Persians. Like as also the Sicyonians wear yet the crown of eternal commendation for the thankful return of the courtesy of Aratus, by whom they were frankly taken out of the hands of cruel tyrants. If the act of Philip Maria, late Duke of Milan, deserveth detestation for the unnatural cruelty he committed upon the person of his wife (who albeit was equal in nobility, exceeded him in the gifts of fortune and large possessions,of indifferent beauty to content a reasonable man, nothing inferior to the best lady of the country in the ornaments of nature and gifts of grace, and yielding him besides such honour and honest love as was necessary for the state of marriage, yet, notwithstanding, was he so unthankful to all these benefits, that, after he had culled the flower of her beauty and forced her to pass an assurance of her goods and living to his use, he committed secret execution, and washed his hands in the blood of the unfortunate lady, contrary to all civility or law of nature), if he, I say, seem justly meritorious of reproach, we may worthily impart treble praise to a barbarous Turk and admiral of the country of Arabia, who, being overthrown in the battle fought in that country by Baldwin, King of Jerusalem, himself and wife prisoners, with his treasure and munition of war at the disposition of the said King, and being dismissed freely without exaction or ransom, and his wife restored without violation or force of her body, judged it a virtue not to be overcome in magnificence and liberality, and a mortal vice to bear the title of an unthankful prince. Whereof he made declaration: for that, not long after, the said Baldwin being besieged of the infidels, and by distress of war at point to fall into their mercy, the said admiral, not unmindful of the compassion he showed upon his misery, broke into him by night, and with certain assistants of horsemen prevented his present peril, and set him safely upon his way from all offer or fear of danger.

All which I have quoted in this introduction for that my history imports two examples of semblable substance, the one exposing a wonderful effect of friendship on the behalf of his enemy, and the other returning his liberality with such ample consideration that there is no degree in any corner of

Christendom but may see an experience of virtue in the doings of them both. Wherein I wish chiefly a participation of the fruit of such examples to all sorts of our countrymen in England, to the end we may form our lives upon the virtuous precedents of such strangers as, preferring virtue afore vice, have been more curious to get a true renown of reputation than careful of a vainglorious or foolish pomp of the world.

In the Recueils or commentaries of Tuscany, I find special remembrance of a mortal grudge between two of the most noble houses in Sienna, called Salimbino and Montanino: whereof, as both the one and other were of semblable reputation for honour and height of estate, so were they of equal rule and authority in the government of their public weal. Whose parents, albeit, and predecessors, were of singular commendation, by the virtue of mutual society which appeared so entire and indissoluble between them by many descents, that the writers in that age doubted not to term them no less true mirrors and patterns of perfect friendship than either Orestes or Pylades, which the Roman orator makes so famous by peculiar commendation. Yet, according to the opinion of Aristotle, as children commonly do rather exceed their fathers in vice than resemble them in virtue, so the posterities of these noble houses, in place to persevere in the virtue of their parents or tread in the steps of their ancient amity, in the very entry of their flourishing time when all men were in expectation of virtuous fruits like to their fathers, with hope to confirm the league of their long friendship, they embraced sinister occasions of civil mutinies, grounding great quarrels upon slender or small substance, with a disposition and equal desire the one to pursue the other with such fatal hate and unnatural tyranny that as the one was almost brought even to the brink of utter desolation of his house and revenue, so the other (triumphing albeit in the conquest of his enemy) escaped not only without peremptory peril of himself and loss of a number of his dear kinsmen and companions of race, but also was enjoined to so hard a penance that he lived always after in the continual grudge and disdain of the people: the view of whose malice, preferring a wonderful remorse of conscience, with remembrance of the foulness of the fact passed, pursued him with alarums of

unnatural and fretting disquiet of mind, even until the last separation of his soul and body.

And here, if you compare the quarrel with the cause and weigh in indifferent balance the mischief, murders, with infinite inconveniences derived of so small occasions, you need not doubt to join in opinion with Paulus Jovius and other writers worthy of no less credit than of great fame for learning and skill; who, amongst other general descriptions of Italy, giveth her this peculiar commendation, that, being subject to the influence of a crabbed climate and quarrelous constellation, terms her to be (of all the world) the only storehouse for partialities and civil factions and market place of tumults and suborned troubles—which I could also justify by the authority of the wars between the Florentines and the Siennese, with other free states in the country; besides the civil dissensions among the nobility, with unnatural persecutions of families and kindreds; saving that the discourse would seem more tedious than necessary, and keep me too long from the principal points of my history, which calls me now to perform my promise and satisfy the expectation of the reader.

No man doubteth (I am sure) that, as well antiquity as people of present being, have not had in general regard and peculiar delight the noble exercise of hunting divers kinds of chases; no less for the respect of pleasure, than evitation of divers discommodities, happening oftentimes to the husbandmen by the wild boar and wolf, with other beasts of equal fierceness and like annoy. Wherein, albeit, besides the contentment of the mind, there is to be culled a necessary fruit of double commodity; the one to stir up the idle crew of delicate persons haunting the houses of great men to the exercise and imitation of honest travail; the other, representing the very sleights and policies in war, instructs the young gentlemen, not able as yet to endure the hardness and experience of the field, to discern the advantage of the place, the subtlety in dressing his ambush for being discovered, his time to display the same to the disadvantage of the enemy, the order how and when to give the charge, with an enforcing of courage to pursue the chase so far as good government will give leave.

Yet is not this pleasant skirmish and necessary recreation for youth without some argument of great, and almost

absolute, assurance of diverse sorts of misfortunes; for we read that Meleager lost his life in killing the wild boar of Calydon: Cephalus for the like respect killed his dear friend Procris: the notable philosopher, Adrastus, having the only credit for education of the heir apparent of his prince, and honouring albeit the child with more than an ordinary affection, yet hunting on a time among the deserts of that country, contrary to the will of the King (for that he was warned by a prophecy of the death and destruction of his son in casting dart at the boar), slew him whom he loved as much or more than himself. Besides, for a familiar proof of my allegation in this case, it is not yet eight years since the Count Palatine, one of the chief princes of Germany, being lost of his company in pursuing the chase of a fierce boar, was overthrown, horse and man, and in danger to be devoured by the fury of the beast, if, by good chance, his rider with two fresh dogs had not been at hand to prevent his peril.

So, likewise, by the hunting of a wild boar, grew the bloody quarrel between these two houses. For, having one day by force and policy of men and dogs killed one of the greatest boars about Sienna, in the particular commendation which every man gave to the doughtiness of his dog, there began to kindle a kind of mislike in the hearts of the two young lords, which—with the heat of the wine wherein they gulled without regard after their travail, and the blood being chafed with the press and number of terms of reproach—bolked out at last to cruel blows; which (without respect of persons) seemed so to occupy the place for the time that, besides a number that were hurt on both parts, the Salimbins had the worst, for that one of their chiefs was left for dead in the field. Wherewith, the fray discontinued for that time, and every man retired; the Montanins, not glad of the victory, for that they doubted a revenge; and the Salimbins, contented by force with their present fortune; attending, notwithstanding, the assistance of a better time to redeem the blood of their kinsman, not with equal loss of their enemy, but with utter ruin and subversion of the whole house of their adverse party. Which they failed not accordingly to perform with such hot expedition and power, that, after diverse public skirmishes and private combats, with indecent murders (the contrary party having consumed the most part of their rent and revenue in maintaining garrisons to withstand

their malice) within the compass of no long time they had brought to extreme depopulation the whole kindred of the Montanins, except one young gentleman named Charles, who, finding himself too weak to resist any longer the rage of his adversaries, retired to a contentment by force and gave place to their fury; and they, also, finding the field abandoned without any to make head against them, dismissed their angry humour and laid aside their bloody weapons, being dulled with the heavy and mortal blows upon their conquered enemies.

This Charles and last remainder of the house of Montanino being appointed by destiny to live yet in spite of his enemies, stirred not out of the town of Sienna; where, as a solitary man in the press of his adversaries, he lived without either saluting or haunting the place of their repair; being favoured, notwithstanding, of the most part of the city, for that, after so many broils and hurley burleys of war—which, with the fisc, had converted the greatest part of his portion and inheritance into nothing—he lived, notwithstanding, of that little which fortune had left him, in honest sort; maintaining a train according to the state and condition of his living; having in the house with him the company of his sister, which the gods seemed to reserve, not only for his special consolation in so great a calamity, but also, in restoring their house to its ancient entire and being, to build again a new and perfect friendship upon the first foundation, and confirm eftsoons by her virtue a perpetuity of indissoluble amity between her brother and the house of his extreme adversary. Her name was Angelica; whose special ornaments by nature and peculiar gifts of God challenged not only an equality, but a degree above, the best and greatest dames of the country. So seemed she justly meritorious of that name, without doing wrong to any; because her wisdom, womanly behaviour, with humble courtesy, made such declaration of her honesty and virtue, that they which hated their house, and detested the remembrance of their race, could not close their mouths from her due commendation, nor forbear to wish that their daughters and children were of semblable disposition.

Such is the operation and force of true virtue in the hearts of such as embrace her with unfeigned sincerity; exposing in like sort such fruits as seem wondrous in the eye of the world and exceed the common imagination of men, by reducing the

confusion of kindreds into an entire of everlasting amity, and of a mortal enemy to make a most assured friend. Whereof, they that doubt of the goodness of so great a gift, may be satisfied by the present proof of this Angelica ; who so fed the ears of the city with the general bruit and commendation of her virtue, that in one moment he, which erst was chief and captain of the war against them, and seemed invincible against all the aid and assistance they could procure, is now become a slave, and most subject to the view and contemplation of her beauty ; in such sort as, by little and little, he grew into terms of extreme affection and undoubted zeal towards her, whose name he hated, erst, no less than the cankered sting of the cruel cockatrice. Wherein, as the humour of his love seemed to exceed the ordinary impressions of men in that case, so he neither was able to resist the hot summons of his new appetite, nor keep war any time with the suggestion of his sudden desire ; but, as one that felt himself stricken with the thunderbolt of his destiny, gave place to his sentence, and entered into device with himself what way to use, to win the encounter of his fancy. The remembrance of the late wrong he had done them seemed a great impediment to his purpose : neither had he the means to demand her in marriage whose tears were scarce dry in bewailing the desolation he had so lately thundered upon all their house, the simple view and record whereof preferred just cause of despair to obtain the good-will of her brother.

Wherewith, feeling a daily increase of his passion, with continual diminution and unlikelihood of means to relieve his torment (specially for that he had imprisoned his liberty, where no ransom could serve to redeem it ; and that love had bound him to so hard a penance, that the only pleasure he had in life was to think upon her whom despair denied him to reclaim by any means) he began to curse the first cause of the quarrel, and wish the hunting of the boar had never been tolerable in Italy ; inveighing withal against the malice of his fortune that seemed to be his guide in the pursuit of so great persecution, and now, in the hope and expectation of rest and repose from toil, to commit him to the mercy of a martyrdom more intolerable than the torment of the wheel, and of less hope to be delivered than the damned souls out of the everlasting flame of hell. Wherein also his chiefest grief and grudge of mind seemed to stand upon double terms ;

both for that he durst neither discover his disease to any of his own friends, whom he knew would rather mislike his request than be moved to compassion upon his case or study to relieve his distress, nor promise himself any likelihood (and much less assurance) ever to cull either flower or fruit of his affection to Angelica ; for that he thought she had no reason to remorse upon him in whose face appeared yet the fresh remembrance of the late revenge and destruction of her kinsmen.

But what ? Who doubteth of the tickle disposition of fortune ; or is not persuaded that the doings of men are as subject to change and alteration as the element to mutability and diversity of complexions, at such time as the great Jupiter, summoning the winds and violence of other weather to quarrel with the calm and quiet sky, eclipseth the natural clearness of the sun by converting him into sundry sorts of dark and dim colours ? Or what constancy or assurance is to be reposed in our worldly affairs, seeing the very thoughts and imaginations of men are disposed and governed by the revolution and course of times ? Wherein the philosopher is of opinion that no degree is dispensed from the climate of the constellation. " For," saith he, " the favours and displeasures of princes are neither so mortal nor of such continuance, but being incident to conversion, we see in one moment an assured conjunction of friendship with him who erst pursued our subversion with mortal hate. And truly he that weigheth the commutation of things with indifferent judgment may justly note him of great simplicity, that resolves perpetuity or continual stay or abode in anything that is either accidental or proper to man."

Wherein as I am sufficiently justified by ancient records and foreign authorities, so he that with diligence will quote the Chronicles of England and France within these hundred years, shall find choice of examples to clear his doubt and confirm him in the contrary opinion : which, because it imports such consequence, and rather exceeds than seems convenient for the compass of my present intent, I leave them to the construction of the diligent reader, who, sifting nearly the monuments of that time, may find the more alteration and change of estates in both those realms within less than so many years than in the space of two hundred years afore. For he may see there of credible report, that he that governed

as king, sitting in the seat royal of the realm, making the whole multitude tremble at the voice of his commandment, was suddenly deposed and scarcely escaped the infamy of a cruel and slanderous death ; and, on the other part, the other that attended only the fatal destruction of himself and family, is not only restored to the sceptre of the kingdom, but also in a moment sits in the judgment-seat upon vengeance and correction of them which had given sentence and awarded the writ of execution against himself.

Calir, one of the three great Bashaws of the great Turk, had no less awe and authority over the whole Mahometan empire than undoubted credit with the emperor and mighty monarch himself ; who would never consult of any enterprise without the counsel of this captain, nor perform any expedition without his company ; and yet, upon a sudden, and without any cause (saving the malicious appetite of his master), he was cruelly strangled in presence, and by commandment, of him whom he had so faithfully honoured and served. On the contrary side, the valiant Argon Tartar, after he was entered into arms against his uncle Tangodor Khan, being taken and adjudged to pass by the rigour of torments, and after receive the due hire of unnatural conspiracy, as he was sent into Armenia to be executed, being at the point to commit himself to the mercy of the tormentors, and past all hope or expectation of aid, was suddenly rescued by certain Tartars of the garrison and household servants to his late father deceased, and restored after to the dominion and kingdom of Tartary in the year of our Lord a thousand-two-hundred-four-score-and-five. The example of the Empress Adelaide makes no less proof herein than the former records ; for, being unhappily fallen into the hands of the tyrant Berenger, the usurper at that time of the empire, after she had long tried the courtesy of this miserable and wretched disposition, being at the very brink and place of execution, where was no likelihood nor imagination of aid, had the assistance of a good fortune ; for, avoiding his cruel sentence by a secret and sudden flight at the same instant, was married after to Otto, the first of that name ; and lived till she saw the just revenge of her wrong upon the same usurper and his race, by Otto, her son, succeeding his father in the monarchy.

All which, of no less authority than undoubted credit, I

have preferred as assured patterns of the mobility and uncertain stay of the state of the affairs of this world. Wherein also, when the occasion doth offer, you may note a verification, or like accident, in the sequel of this Montanino ; who, after the depopulation of his house by civil war, and the most part of his portion wasted in the supply of that quarrel, fell into a misery more tragical than the other and of less hope of aid or delivery ; and yet, being passed the extreme summons of his fortune and attending the fatal and last moment of execution, after he had dismissed all expectation of succour, his deliverance appeared by him that procured and pursued his distress. And the same misery that first moved his ruin, reserved such a virtue in the end of his tragedy, that, by the only assistance of him whom he thought to have sworn his destruction, he was restored with more assurance and contentment of mind than afore.

But now to our amorous Salimbino, who, tossed in the stormy sea of his unquiet thoughts, was no less passioned on the behalf of Angelica than she most careful to comfort the calamity of her brother, with endeavour to live together in mutual tranquillity, according to the summons of nature and decree of law of kind ; neither respecting the torment of her enemy which she knew not, nor regarding to prank up herself to please the appetite of any other. And, albeit, it was his chance sometime to accost her in the street, or other place, where he forgat not to give her the *baciamano*, with all show and argument of humble duty ; and she, in like sort, returned his Italian salutation with seemly and not semblable courtesy ; yet saw he no means to remove the despair of her good-will, nor she able to discern the cause of his new and sudden greeting. But, as he suffered himself at the first to be subject to the summons of love, and gave him privilege without resistance to build his bower in the bottom of his heart ; so, being now too weak to supplant him who hath conquered and made himself lord over all the parts in him, he is bound to bear the yoke of continual passion, without licence or liberty to be dispensed from the least assault and alarum which that hellish tormentor ministereth to such as march under the ensign of his awe ; neither hath he other consolation in his present distress, but such as is appointed to feed the desolate minds of desperate lovers ; moderating in some part the force of their affliction with imagination that the benefit of time

will, at last, either put the prey of their desire into their hands, or else give end to their disquiet by some suborned abridgment of their natural days. Wherein, as he languished with no less perplexity of mind than happeneth to such as by fate are forced to pass through the misery of such doleful trances, so, as he attended in this sort the gift of a better occasion, behold ! the approach of the second disaster or tragedy of the unhappy Montanino.

For within the city of Sienna dwelt a long-nosed merchant, who, for the most part, as they be more greedy to get than worthy of that which they have, so do they seldom or never respect the means so they may finger that which they wish. He had joining to the uttermost suburbs of the city a fair house, environed wth large demains, whereupon confined, on all parts, certain pieces of ground of the said Montanino ; which, with a bare house in the town, as it was all that the malice of his fortune had left him of the ample patrimony of his parents, so this hungry burgess, thinking it no offence or grudge of conscience to enlarge his living with the portion of his neighbour (knowing well enough that after so many occasions of great expenses, he was not only in distress for money, but wanted other necessary furniture), sent his broker to board him for the sale of his lands in the country, with commission to give him a thousand ducats for those grounds which joined to his lordship without the suburbs. Wherein his request was frustrated, and he was out of hope that way to win the effect of his desire, for that Charles was resolved to make store of those grounds above the rest of the little that was left him ; chiefly for that besides they were parcel of the ancient possessions of his parents ; yet he reserved a special zeal to those lands, because the view of them restored a fresh remembrance of such as in many ages before had borne the greatest sway in that public weal. Wherewith the covetous villain, not content with the reasonable denial of the gentleman, did not immediately dismiss his desire to get that which he ought not to have wished, but determined not only to win it by unorderly means, but also for revenge of the plain answer of the Montanino entered into device to suborn some means to have it at a less price, and not without the hazard and peril of the life of that poor gentleman ; following therein the detestable example of the unjust Jezebel, who procured the death of Naboth, to the end she might enjoy his possession.

Wherein he was furthered everyway, but chiefly with the assistance of the time.

For at the same instant, by reason of the mutual quarrels and civil dissensions that reigned long before in the most parts of Italy, most of the nobility were driven the country ; and those few that remained, lived not only under the awe of town clerks and catchpoles, chosen by the rural crew, but also had small assurance of safety in their towns or cities ; where, for the more subjection and awe of the gentlemen, this villainous sect of cursed caterpillars made a law not much unlike the tyrannous statute which the Athenians had in the time of Solon, that no man, of what degree or condition soever he were, should, neither by himself nor procurement of any other, go about to purchase the repeal or restitution of any that were banished their country, upon pain to yield to the fisc a thousand florins ; with addition, that if he were not able to answer the condemnation within ten days, to lose his head in rembrance of the forfeit.

Who marks well the mystery of this law, may easily judge the viperous meaning of those wretches, who rather resemble the barbarous tyrants and infidels without faith than seem to have the hearts of true Christians. And happy is he that is not born under the government of such a state ; where they do not only shut the gates of compassion against their innocent neighbours and friends, abandoned their country for peculiar grudges one against another, but also punished, by an unnatural cruelty, the virtue of such as seek to supply the affliction of them that ought to be of equal regard and honour to the best of them. And, besides that this oppressor of innocents was both one of the law-makers and chief minister and commander of the same, yet was he sure of a second assistance, which seemed no less available to him than the advantage of his power or authority.

Wherefore, dispensing with no time in the execution of his devilish device, he summoned Don Charles by writ to appear before the Senate, where was laid afore him the breach of the said law. And for a more proof or plain of the matter, the accusation was no sooner published than he had at his elbow double choice of perjured witnesses ; who, what by the awe of his authority, and the infecting summons of certain pieces of gold wherewith he had filed their tongues afore, avouched the appeal by oath ; deposing further, that they

knew where he had solicited to redeem diverse of his banished friends, seeking to supplant the state of the city by restoring the nobles and gentlemen to their ancient rule and authority. Which made the poor Montanino in such double amaze of doubt and fear, that he was not only void of counsel for the present, but in despair to defend his right against the malice of the whole state ; chiefly for that the procurer of the fisc, smelling the approach of so great a gain, awarded authorities to arrest his body to prison, and pursued his process with such expedition, that within six days he was condemned upon the statute of repeal, and to pay the forfeit within nine days after, or else to leave his head in pawn of the payment.

The law imported such rigour that there was no place for mediation or suit of entreaty, and the ears of the justice were closed against the complaint of innocents ; neither durst any man inveigh on his behalf, for fear of him that was the author of the act. And the aid of kinsmen is as cold in that country as in other places. And friends nowadays resemble the raven or hungry kite, who never flieth but towards the place where they hope to find something to prey upon ; so the friends of our age be fled so far from the virtue of true friendship, that they will not only refuse to relieve him whom God and nature hath bound them to sustain, but also make no conscience to disclaim the name of a kinsman to the nearest ally they have ; and that without any cause, unless you will impute it to the want of equal wealth. Wherein mine own experience moveth me to make a challenge to some in England ; if my power were as indifferent to plead with him, as I have just reason to put him in remembrance of his fault. Albeit that quarrel is tolerable which marcheth under the flag of innocency and truth ; and just objections will make the guilty blush.

But now to the sorrowful Montanino, who, complaining the points of his disaster in a dark prison, where was no kind of consolation nor yet the offer of any echo to resound his dolorous cries, was saluted the next day with a copy of his sentence definitive, wherein he was taxed to the sum of a thousand florins or loss of life within nine days. Here he found what it is to have an evil neighbour, and how greatly they do thirst that desire to drink of any other man's cup, but chiefly the insatiable longing of such as are with child for another man's living. And, albeit his conscience was

without grudge for any offence or breach of the law, yet his grief seemed of hard toleration, because the cursed treason of a cankered clown should triumph over him so far, that, to quench the glut of his covetous rage, he should be forced to disinherit himself and leave without succour his dear sister; who, for her part, was so dolorous on the behalf of this new disaster fallen upon her brother that she stirred not out of her chamber, nor once suffered her eyes to be dry from tears since the first news of that sorrowful accident; which she complained with more vehemency because she saw a present approach of peremptory destruction to the little remainder of the whole house.

"Alas," saith she, "is the cruelty of fortune of such rigorous condition or her malice of such perpetuity, that she will grant no dispense, nor admit any oblation or offer to purchase her favour? Or is there no sacrifice to satisfy the angry disposition of the heavens, who cease not to thunder whole millions of mishaps upon this desolate and wretched house of ours, with continuance of their angry regards even until the utter dissolution of the same? How much better had it been for us few as remain of the decayed stock and withered generation of Montanino, to have passed, amongst the rest of our companions, by the edge of the sword of the enemy, than, in living, to be miserable partakers of the unjust malice of such as are not only common enemies to innocency, but, bearing a natural grudge to the very remembrance and name of nobility, do hunt with open mouth (as the ravening wolf) to devour the descents of noble kind! How can this bear the name of a free city, or justly merit the title of a state not incident to servile law; where the government passeth under the convey of a confused multitude, whom nature hath ordained to draw the yoke of other men's awe, and law of kind (in their nativity) framed to be subject to such as their rural force constrains to stoop to the sentence of their doom?

"Ah! brother," saith she, with a fresh supply of sorrowful tears, "how rightly can I conster the cause of thy present trouble and indifferent undoing of us both? The example of thy wrong argues sufficiently the detestable disposition of our cursed Senators, who seem more greedy to hunt the chase of unlawful and filthy gain, than careful to keep their conscience without spot or grudge of manifest oppression and wrong. For if the desire of thy little living in the country, and

glistering show of thy great house in the open gaze and eye of the whole world passing by the streets, had not stirred up the covetous humour of that ravenous merchant, thou hadst lived free from care, and thy estate far from any question in the Senate House ; neither would any man have charged thee with imputation of a thing, which I would to God thou hadst not only undertaken, but also brought in effect ; to the end thou mightest have been the author, and I the witness, of the just revenge of this villainous crew, whose natural malice, more than either reason or justice, doth clog thee with this hard imposition of manifest wrong. There is no reason that a pelting merchant, never nourished in any school of civil or courteous education, other than in a shop amongst prentices and companions of his own calibre, or the son of him that is a slave and servile born by kind, should either bear office in a commonwealth, and much less sit in judgment of them whose hearts by nature abhor to be tried by the barbarous voice of so vile and base people.

" Oh ! how happy be these states and countries, where kings give laws and princes use respect of favour to such as resemble them in condition and virtue : neither hath he great cause to grudge with his doom, that hath his cause debated in the presence of his prince, and his sentence published by such as be of equal honour and reputation ; where we, alas ! may justly exclaim against our cursed constellation, that hath brought us forth in so unhappy a time, and made us, not only incident, but subject and slaves, to a council more perverse and partial than corruption itself ! I would our predecessors or some good fortune of foreign time, by reducing this country into a monarchy, had established a seat royal of a king, with authority that only his seed and succession should govern the whole, rather than by leaving it thus dispersed into diverse confused liberties, to make us a mutual prey one to another. For have we not the Frenchmen at our backs and the army of the great Vicar of Rome on the one side, with the subtle Florentines ready to invade us on the other side, in such sort as whoso is hungry may boldly prey upon us without resistance. And yet, for a more increase of our wretchedness, we maintain war with ourselves ; and the best part are subdued and made thrall to such as are not worthy anyway to be valet to the worst of us that feel ourselves grieved with such affliction.

"But what can satisfy the covetousness of man, or what benefit can stay him that is given to perfidy or falsehood; and to what end, alas! serve my tears or tunes of dolorous exclamation, if not in recording the circumstance of our mutual grief, to restore a fresh remembrance of thy peculiar disaster? O dear brother! whose destinies, I see, will not dismiss the rigour of their doom, till they have brought us both to the brink of extreme subversion. Albeit, if the offer of my body in sacrifice or other mortal execution would serve to redeem thy liberty, and preserve thy possession in entire, assure thyself that thy poor Angelica would be no less ready to make exchange of her life for the ransom of thy contentment and quiet, than these wide-mouthed rooks do seek and gape to devour thy honour and living,"

And as the dolorous lady was thus in torments of dole, with more passion on the behalf of her brother than care anyway for herself, the poor Montanino, standing between a hard sentence and a most unhappy fortune, considered the last day of fatal respite to draw fast to its date. And having no choice of means to moderate the rigour of the law but by satisfying the whole demand of the fisc, which also he was not able to levy by any credit or assistance of his friends, reposed his last assurance and refuge of delivery in the sale of his land. And as the taste of life is pleasant to all men, and each degree by nature is careful to prolong it to the last hour, so, according to the extreme condition of his present case, he resolved to employ the price of his living in the ransom of his present trouble. Whereupon he despatched immediately one of the sergeants, or officers of the gaol, to the corrupt money-master that was first and all the cause of his undeserved mischief, with commission to conclude the bargain for a thousand ducats, according to the rate of his first offer.

But the traitorous wretch and pernicious pattern of iniquity, knowing the extreme points of the poor prisoner who stood now in water up to the chin with more likelihood to sink than assurance to recover the firm land, thought that his death would deliver him free possession of his living without the assistance of money. Wherefore, triumphing already in the glory of so great a fortune, with expectation to have the land by special award of the fisc and Senate, returned the messenger with answer that, albeit of late he had desire to enlarge his demain in the suburb with a piece of his possession

adjoining, yet upon a further view and consideration of the ground, he was now of mind that his price far exceeded the value, neither could he make so present a profit upon so small a plot of inheritance, as with the use and interest of so great a sum of money as a thousand ducats. Notwithstanding, for a supply of his present meed, he was contented to give him seven hundred florins, and that more for the relief of his distress than any respect of commodity by the bargain.

Here may be noted the virtue and operation of the covetous mind, infected with the desire of filthy gain, whose fruits are to thirst after other men's goods and glory in the decay of their neighbour, with a disposition to convert the ungracious spoils of their brethren into a pleasant prey to their ravening appetite, without regard notwithstanding to the express inhibition of God in diverse places of the Scriptures, or respect to the duty of his conscience or burthen of his soul. Wherein, besides the penal threats of our Saviour in the world to come, he seems also to hire a tormentor to molest his quiet during his abode here : for the more he is in device to increase his wealth, the faster decreaseth his quiet, and himself so subject to declination, according to the words of the Apostle, that a covetous man taketh more revenge of himself being alive, than his enemy when he is dead ; neither doth he consume the day in other devices than in accumulation of treasure, nor yields charity to any but his golden coffers, which he will not defray nor once diminish of a simple denier, if it were to redeem the life of his natural father.

You have heard his former offer of a thousand ducats, with no less desire to have it at that price ; and now you see he doth not only refuse it, but in a mockery makes a disdainful tender of seven hundred florins, attending a further benefit by the death of the unfortunate Montanino, who, no less astonied at the report of this resolution and refusal not looked for, than when the judge published the sentence of his condemnation, began to despair of other refuge ; chiefly for that the awe and respect of authority of that villain prevailed so much over the rest of the merchants and citizens there, that none other durst undertake the bargain, seeing their master usurer made difficulty to advance the value. Such were the despites of his fortune and extreme terms which sinister fate, with the malice of the wicked, had brought him unto.

Wherein, dismissing the expectation of all succour, he gave sentence of his own life, and committed the execution to the rigour of the law; resolving rather to quench the insatiable thirst or greedy appetite of his covetous enemy by the oblation of his innocent life into the hands of such unrighteous judges, than, in exchanging the remainder of his whole inheritance for so small a tribute (insufficient, also, to satisfy the demand of the fisc), to leave his sister in extreme penury, without all means of necessary sustentation. Wherefore, reposing much for himself in the innocency of his cause at the hands of the High Judge (chiefly for that the natural course of his days stood at point to be abridged by the wicknesness of other men), after he had preferred certain vehement invectives against the general malice of the world, with special exclamation on the behalf of his peculiar mishap, he desired respite to examine his life in secret and dispose for the health of his soul.

Which resolution of death was forthwith imparted to the fair Angelica; who, besides whole rivers of tears distilling from her watery eyes, with dolorous cries in doleful voice, redoubled with an echo of treble dole, entered into a mortal war with her garments and attire of her head, neither forbearing to dishevel her crispy locks and hair exceeding the colour of amber, nor commit cruel execution upon the tender parts of her body. And giving free scope to the humour of her fury she spared not to imprint with her nails upon the precious complexion of her orient face, a pitiful remembrance of the tragical trouble of her desolate brother, whom she could not in anyway persuade to a change or alteration of purpose, although she employed herself and counsel of her friends to the uttermost. But I dare avouch this much on the behalf of the dear zeal she bare him, that, if by the force and malice of the distress he had given place to nature and died, she had not lived to have revenged his wrong nor lamented her own desolation. For the same affection which moved her to such care of his life, would also have procured her to have been his companion to the grave; whereby one tomb at one instant should have served to shroud the two bodies and last remainder of the whole race and house of the Montanins.

And that which seemed to restore her dolorous passion with a fresh supply and increase of new sorrow, was the heavy news of diverse of her near kinsmen touching the speedy

approach of the extreme date and delay of the sentence definitive. Which, as they had not only endeavoured to defer yet some longer time, but also to purchase a moderation of the rigour, so, being no less frustrated in the one, than void of assurance or hope of the other, they said there rested nothing on their powers to perform or discharge the office of true friends on her behalf, saving to persuade her to consolation, and to use patience in cases of adversity, chiefly where there appears absolute despair of all remedy, and the sinister suggestion of malicious fortune hath suppressed all hope and expectation of delivery. Wherein, as an unfeigned witness of their present dolour they let fall certain tears to accompany the pitiful dole of her who, upon the report of these last occurrences, forgat not to fill the air full of hollow sighs, with open exclamation against the law of nature, that seemed so careless of her creatures as not only to leave them without armour or sufficient resistance against the ordinary assaults of the world, but also to make them subject by special destiny to the sentence and doom of a most unrighteous and hard fortune.

But albeit adversity (besides that she is subject to sundry sorts of calamity) is also " so quarrelous of her one disposition, that, for the respect of one simple or peculiar wrong, she makes us to exclaim generally against all liberties and laws of God and man ; yet ought we so to check that same humour of inordinate rage that mortifieth within us all regard of duty and reason, that we despair not in the goodness of Him, Who, being the giver of all comfort and God of consolation, is more ready to dispose it on our behalf, than we able to deserve the gift of so great a benefit " ; and Who—in the midst of the tears of this desolate lady, being with the rest of her friends wholly resolved to endure the rigorous sentence of their fate—presented the catastrophe of the tragedy, with such an offer or means of speedy delivery of the prisoner, that it did not only exceed the expectation of all men, but seemed also the work of such a wonderful mystery, that no man was able to imagine the device, afore their eyes gave judgment of the effect.

For the same day, about the ninth or tenth hour of the evening, Anselmo Salimbino, whom heretofore you have heard to be sore passioned with the love of Angelica, having spent certain days of recreation in the country, is now returned to Sienna ; where, passing by the gate of his lady, he chanced to

hear a lamentable noise of women bewailing the misery of the Montanins. Wherewith, pursuing the bruit with a more diligent ear, he spied at last coming out of the palace of Angelica certain old dames his next neighbours, all besprent and dyed with the dew of sorrowful tears, as though they had then come from the funeral of some of their friends. Of whom he enquired the cause of such unaccustomable dole, and whether and what new misfortune were happened of late to the house of the Montanins. And being at large resolved of that which you have heard by special report, went immediately to his chamber, where he began to discourse diversely of this sudden chance ; sometime determining the delivery of Charles for the only respect of his sister, whose good-will he thought he could not purchase anyway so well as by the benefit and price of so great a friendship ; by and by he accounted the death of her brother a most necessary means to make him the master of his desire over his sister.

Wherein, after he had spent some time in secret cogitation, without any certain resolution, notwithstanding, what to do, he seemed to ask open counsel of himself in this sort : " What cause have I hereafter to doubt of the thing I chiefly desire, seeing fortune seems to take more care of my contentment than I am able to wish or imagine ; undertaking (as it seems) to present me with the effect of my business, when I least thought of any hope or likelihood of good success ? For by the death of the Mantanino, who is to be executed to-morrow in public as a rebel or heinous offender of the state, I shall not only see the last revenge of the most mortal enemies of our house, but also live without fear hereafter to be molested by any that shall descend of him ; and, on the other side, his death takes away all impediments offering either to stay or hinder me from enjoying of her whom I love so dearly. For her brother being dead and his goods and living confiscated to the state, what stay or support hath she, if not in her beauty and love of some honest gentleman ; who, taking compassion of the loss of so rare an ornament and work of nature, may entertain her for his pleasure, until the glass of so brickle a gift decay with his delight in her company, and then, for the respect of pity, to bestow her in marriage with some competent portion ?

" But what of Salimbino ? Shall the offer of any unseemly revenge prevail above that respect and duty thou

art born to bear and owe unto true virtue? Or wilt thou so much abuse the former glory of thy ancestors and present renown of thyself, with an act no less detestable afore God than hateful to the ears of all degrees of honesty? And wilt thou thus deceive the expectation of thy friends, and leave them in continual reproach to the posterity of all ages, with a note of such infamy that time itself can scarce rase out of the remembrance of man? If all these lack authority to dissuade thee, let only the respect and awe of virtue with remorse of conscience keep thee from committing so heinous an offence. For to what other end have the ancients put a difference between the gentleman and creatures of baser condition, but that in exposing fruits of civil courtesy we should also strive to make ourselves noble, and exceed them in the imitation of true virtue?

"And as it is far from the office of a noble heart to thunder revenge upon such as are not able to resist thy power, so there can be no greater argument or proof of true magnanimity than, in burying the desire of vengeance in a tomb of eternal oblivion, to expose most fruits of compassion, where there appears great cause to extend the uttermost of rigour, and where, on the adverse party, is least expectation or hope of succour. For how can a man lay a more sure foundation of perpetual glory than in correcting the humour of his foul appetite and conquering the unbridled affections of the wilful mind, to make them bound unto thee by thy benefits, who were in despair to receive any pleasure at thy hands? The which declaration of true virtue, like as it happeneth so seldom amongst men nowadays, that we may very well term it a thing exceeding the common course and order of nature; so he that will challenge the title of true nobility and seem to excel the rest in the appeal of perfect honour, must prefer in public such absolute effects of his worthiness and virtue, as the same may justly appear meritorious of an immortal memory in the succession of all future ages.

"The chiefest points of so large commendation, which so many records of antiquity do attribute unto the great Dictator Cæsar, consist more in the clemency he used to his enemies, being vanquished and under the awe of his mercy, than in the mortal and many battles he fought against the valiant Gauls and Britons, or subduing the renowned Pompey. The great Alexander deserved no less honour for the pity and courtesy

he used towards Sisigambis, the mother of Darius, with other desolate ladies which he took prisoners in the battle fought at Arbela, than fame in the conquest of the king and country of Persia and Media ; and at the death of the wife of Darius in his camp, he let fall no less effusion of tears than if he had been present at the burial of Olympias, his natural mother. Neither could he have made so great a conquest of the whole Eastern world with his small crew and company of Macedonians, if he had not subdued more countries by clemency than force of arms. Besides, who is ignorant of the late courtesy of Don Roderico Vivano of Spain, who, albeit he might have revenged the infidelity of Don Pietro, then King of Aragon (for that he went about to impeach his expedition against the Saracens), being then at Granada, did not only forbear to punish him or put him to ransom, but also, being his prisoner by order and law of arms, dismissed him into his country with no less honour than belonged to his estate, without any exaction of his person or realm.

" Wherein, for my part, the more I rave in the rarity of their noble virtues, so much the more ought I to increase my endeavour in the imitation of the like examples. And, of the contrary, what great cause have I to prefer a continuation of the grudge ended already by war ; or why should I stir up eftsoons a fresh remembrance of the fault already forgiven ? What injury have they done to me or mine, which was not returned unto them without interest of double revenge ? Admit their predecessors have been enemies to my house : have they not borne a more hard penance than the greatness of their offence deserved ? What cause have I then to renew the alarum of their misery ; or why stay I to succour their desolate state in some satisfaction of the injuries they have received by me and mine ? Besides, the wrath of God, according to the words of the Apostle, is always hanging over the heads of such as seem to take pleasure in the affliction of their neighbour, rejoice in the misfortune or misery of another. If all this lack sufficient force to mortify the remembrance of ancient malice within me, and, exposing (contrary to the expectation and opinion of the world) a wonderful example of virtue, to move me to relieve his distress that despaireth of all succour, and reclaim by liberality the friendship of him who, if he ever offended, is already pardoned, like as also if his innocency have been abused by me and mine—my

conscience calleth me to a remorse, in rendering satisfaction in so needful a time.

" Yet am I drawn by a bond of further duty, and incensed by a summons or special instigation of the honour and service which my heart hath already vowed on the behalf of her whose beauty and virtue deserves a greater meed than the uttermost that I can do, either for the contentment of her or consolation of her brother. For, like as there is no man (unless he be utterly divested from the gift of humanity), being passioned with equal affection and summoned by semblable desire to do some notable service to my dear Angelica, as I am, that would not rack his power to the highest pin, to take away the chief causes of her doleful tears, and restore her to a speedy contentment convenient for her merit ; so, in loving her, I must also embrace such as she accounts and (by good right) are most dear unto her. And if I will make a declaration of the true zeal I bear her, why do I stay to expose it in so needful a time and on the behalf of him whom she loveth no less than herself, attending even now the fatal stroke of the murdering sword for a trifling due of a thousand florins ? And why should I doubt to make it known in public that only the force of love hath made me tributary to the fair Angelica ? For seeing that kings and the greatest monarchs of the world do draw under the yoke of his awe, it is not for me to eschew that by special privilege, which is incident to all men by nature. Neither ought I herein to refuse the offer of my destiny, nor strangers to enter into much marvel, if I (being of the metal of other men and subject to no less impression and passions of mind than the rest) do make present dedication of my heart and service to her, whose virtue I am sure is so invincible against all adversity, that neither necessity, nor the most extreme message that fortune can send her, is able to make her forfeit the least point of her honesty or forget the renown of the genealogy whereof she is descended.

" Wherein, as honest love hath stirred up this motion in me with composition to expose immediately the fruits and effects of semblable virtue ; so the speedy delivery of thy brother, O Angelica, shall argue sufficiently to all men, that it is only the regard of thy beauty that hath paid the price of his ransom, and removed from his tender legs the heavy irons which the penance of hard imprisonment had unjustly enjoined unto him : triumphing, also, with this increase of

further glory, that only the regards and glances of thy glistening eyes have made a breach into the heart which erst hath defied the malice and uttermost of all force, and made him bow of his own kind, that never could be brought to bend or stoop to any of what degree or condition soever they were.

"And thou, Seigneur Charles, for thy part hast this day gained so assured and perfect a friend, that if thou wilt confirm the league by frank consent, the amity shall not be only mutual between us till death discharge the same by separation of our bodies, but also remain no less indissoluble to the posterity and succession of both our races for ever. And as in the first work of this new society, I will not only strive to exceed thee in show of perfect friendship, but also make the way open, by my example, to all degrees of nobility to attain to the like honour by semblable virtue; so I pronounce here a further confirmation on my part, with protestation by the faith and life of a gentleman, to embrace thee and thy friends with no less affection than myself, and persecute thy enemies with no less mortality than if they had conspired and put in use the destruction of the noble house of Salimbino."

Wherewith, seeing the necessity of the time craved rather an expedition of diligence than longer discourse or deliberation, he took a bag of a thousand ducats, and went immediately to the Deputy Receiver of penal forfeitures of the state of Sienna, whom he found perusing certain accounts in his study. And after he had taken him the bag, with addition that there was the whole demand due to Don Charles Montanino, he commanded to give an acquittance with his writ of delivery from the instant. But telling the contents of the bag, he found a surplusage of the sum due by the prisoner; which, as he offered to restore, so the other did not only refuse to take it, but also would not depart the place till he had despatched one of his people to the master of the jail; who, perceiving a tender of the money, withdrew the action, and sent to fetch the prisoner out of his dungeon and dark cabinet, clogged with heavy shackles and clinking irons.

Charles, hearing a noise of bouncing at doors and opening of rusty locks, imagined it had been the coming of some ghostly father to hear his shrift and last confession; and that the Senate (in respect of the honour and estimation of his house) had granted him the privilege of a secret execution within the prison, for avoiding the public shame which

commonly attends the misery of such as declare their last testament upon the scaffold in the gaze of all the world. And having already examined his conscience according to the shortness of his leisure, so far forth as he seemed only to attend the fatal hour, desired God eftsoons to strengthen him with His grace, not leaving him without assistance in his journey and passage so perilous ; where oftentimes the most assured do not only waver but utterly decline, if they be not supported by His special favour. In the end of which secret meditation, he commended unto His goodness the life of his dear sister ; desiring, with humble tears in a special petition and last request, to be protector and defend her always from all assaults and offers of infamy or dishonour.

Being thus brought into the hall of the jailer, the tormentors or officers of the prison began to knock off the bolts from his legs, and present him besides (in show of countenance) rather with arguments of consolation than cause of fresh disquiet or distrust of delivery. Which kind of courtesy, not looked for, stirred up in his troubled mind a sudden hope or expectation of good fortune, with an absolute assurance, almost, of that which afore he durst never imagine and much less account to come to pass. Whereof, notwithstanding, the effect appeared at the instant. For the jailer, showing him his letters of delivery, told him it was in his power to use the benefit of his former liberty. " For," saith he, " the law is choked and fully answered for her due, and I satisfied to the uttermost of the charges and fees of your imprisonment : desiring you, sir, if you have found worse entreaty at my hands than I see your offence hath deserved, to consider the charge of my office, and to impute it rather to the strait commission enjoined me by the senate, than any desire of myself to deal with you in other sort than the bond and respect of the dutiful zeal I bear you doth require."

Here is to be noted a wonderful difference in the casualties accidental to man ; and that the changes and alterations in love be of a contrary disposition to the rest of the passions that trouble the mind. Neither need we doubt (by the authority of this example, no less credible than of great admiration, but love is a certain virtue of itself, seeing it works the effect and exposeth such fruits as seem to resemble rather the operation of a divine miracle than the suggestion of our frail fancy. For how had this Salimbino redeemed so

freely, and in a time of such need, the careful Charles (being firmly confirmed in mortal grudge as you have heard), if the very virtue, which we are not able to term by a proper name in love, had not broken by force of a zealous affection the angry inclination of his nature, and converted the humour of his ancient wrath into a compassion exceeding the imagination of man ?

And as it is an ordinary argument of humanity to give succour to such as neither have deserved anything of us, and much less we never knew nor saw (because nature herself doth summon us all to be thankful to such as resemble ourselves in condition or calling) ; so, that virtue deserveth treble commendation, which, exceeding as it were the authority of nature, doth force in us such an inclination, which doth not only mortify in our hearts the obstinate humour nourished of long continuance, but makes us pliable to the things which we could not so much as admit afore into our cogitations, and much less perform by any persuasion of the world. Whereof you may note a familiar experience in the disposition of this Salimbino, who suffered himself to be more overcome with the beauty, virtue and seemly behaviour of Angelica than with any humility or importunate suit of her brother, although he had lain prostrate a thousand times afore his knee. And what heart is tempered with the metal of such induration that is not mollified and made tractable by the regard of so rare a mystery as the exquisite beauty of this Siennese ? Or who will not slack the rein of his lofty stomach and stoop to the summons of such a paragon, humbling himself withal everyway to get the good-will of her that gave place to no creature in the world for all perfections of God and nature ?

Neither is there any reason at all to charge him with imputation of folly that endeavoureth to honour and embrace in his heart the beauty and other gifts of so virtuous a lady ; nor his travail meritorious of other name than the title of honest exercise, who, adding an exact diligence to his dutiful zeal and service in the pursuit of her whose virtues procure his affection, hath his heart armed only with an upright meaning of sincere integrity, and the desire of his mind tending to none other end than a consummation of an honest and lawful request. But, for the contrary, of this honest society I account him not worthy to have the air breathed upon him, who, practising only to seduce and corrupt the chastity of

honest dames, hath no respect to the virtue of honest and true love ; but, seeking only to satifsy the appetite of his sensual lust, doth embrace the exterior parts of a woman, and commends simply the tree charged with leaves, without regarding the fruit which makes it worthy of commendation and fame.

Herewith it cannot be much from our purpose to interlard this digression with the authority of a brief note which I found written in a French book, on behalf of the sincerity which ought to appear in women : comparing the young lady bearing yet the name of a maid to the glistering flower in the pleasant spring, until by her constancy and chaste behaviour, subduing utterly the wanton motions of the flesh, she expose to the world the precious fruits derived of so great a virtue, and give absolute experience of her undoubted pudicity. " For otherways," saith he, " she is in no other degree for worthy renown than the young soldier, whose countenance, albeit, argueth the courage of his heart, yet his captain hath no reason to give judgment of his valiantness, nor cause to repose much credit in him in any expedition or exploit against the enemy, till he see an approved effect in deed of that which he promiseth so largely by his outward appearance ; but when he findeth an absolute confirmation of the exterior likelihoods by the inward virtue and valiantness of the mind, it is then that he doth not only embrace him, but prefereth him afore the rest as a special pattern to imitate his virtues." Even so, besides that the crown of immortal glory attends you ladies, who, by withstanding the assaults and importunities of the flesh, do give to yourselves the true title of honest women, not by force of awe of constraint, but by the valiant resistance of your most chaste and invincible heart ; yet also, the monument of your virtues being graved in pillars of eternity, and advanced to the height of the highest theatre in the world, shall remain as a mirror or worthy spectacle, to procure all posterities not only to tread the path of semblable virtues, but also to yield you a continual adoration after your death by the remembrance and view of your chaste and virtuous life.

Wherewith, wishing you all no less desire to live well than the most of you are greedy of glory, I leave you to the remorse of your own consciences, and present you here with the remainder of my promise touching the sequel of Charles

Montanino ; who, being out of prison as you have heard, repaired immediately to his house, with intent to comfort her whom he knew to be in greater dolour and distress, and as needful of consolation as himself seemed desirous of repose, being so long forewatched in a filthy prison.

And knocking at the gates of his palace, the maid that opened the door and saw it was her master, mounted with more speed than an ordinary pace, and told Angelica the delivery and approach of her brother. Whereunto, what addition or protestation her maid seemed to make, her troubled mind would give no credit (such great impossibility do we account in the execution of those things which we chiefly desire), but seeming no less amazed with the mystery than Saint Peter being suddenly taken forth of the prison of Herod by the Angel, stood as though she had been dreaming of the dissolution of the world, without appearance or sense or argument of lively motion in any part of her, till the presence of her brother (being now in her chamber) seemed to breathe in her an air of fresh consolation and life : and dismissing from the instant the mystery of her dumb trance, received eftsoons her former use and liberty of senses.

Wherewith, converting her dolorous regards and tears of ancient dole into a passion of such sudden gladness, that, being at the point to congratulate his coming with words, she felt a second impediment of speech by the operation of present joy which she took in beholding his face, that she fell down at his feet, embracing and kissing his knees with no less signs and show of a gladsome mind than if by some miracle he had been raised from death to life. Wherewith, certain ladies, her kinswomen, assisting her dolorous distress, having restored her last trance, and doubting eftsoons to fall into the like passion, sent for their husbands, with others the friends of Montanino, as well to rejoice his happy delivery, and so to avoid all occasions of further trances in his sister, as also to excuse their negligence in not assisting his late misery. But Charles, dissimulating that which he thought of their discourtesy towards himself, gave them chief thanks for their friendship in comforting his sister, which he construed to as great an honour and argument of good-will as if they had employed it on the behalf of himself.

Wherewith he dismissed them, divining notwithstanding what he should be that had made so large declaration of so

great a virtue, and sorrowful without measure that he knew him not, to the end he might not only requite so rare a courtesy, but also exceed him in liberality by a frank offer of himself and all that he hath within the world. He seemed not so ignorant of the author of so great a benefit as his sister in treble doubt on the same behalf; persuading herself, notwithstanding, that the fear of death had made him convey a secret sale of his lands in the country to him which first broked it; and that this doubt which seemed to trouble him was only a dark veil to conceal the truth and keep it from her knowledge; or rather his long imprisonment, with disquiet of mind during his trouble, had stalled his senses, and made him rave in that sort. Wherein she was in equal doubt of them all, till he resolved her to the contrary.

Wherewith, departing for that night, they repaired to their several chambers, where the Montanin had more desire of sleep than able to admit any rest; for that he spent all that night in contemplation and contrariety of thoughts; making an assembly in his mind of every shape and figure of such his friends as he was able to imagine to be the workers or cause of so great a benefit, sometime preferring one, sometime presenting another, without touching, notwithstanding, the perfect wight, or naming him that justly had deserved the meed of so great a merit, and to whom he acknowledged no less bond of duty than to them that were the first causers of his coming into this world.

Wherein, passing that night the pictures of a thousand men, his bed seemed to serve him as a wide and large plain, or some roomy alley, or close arbour within a thick wood, to roll up and down, making his discourse with sundry sorts of diverse imaginations, until the discovering of the red globe, or forerunner of the day, summoned Apollo to harness his horse and begin his course over our hemisphere: when he rose and went to the officer of the fisc, of whom he demanded to know what he was that discharged the debt of his late forfeiture.

"He whom you can scarcely imagine," saith the receiver, "hath exceeded all your friends firm and faithful zeal towards you; to whom I have delivered the release of your imprisonment, but not the acquittance of the money, because here is an overplus which I have here to tender unto you with your general discharge."

Wherewith Charles, no less moved against him for the offer of the money, than grieved with the curious delay he seemed to use in disclosing the name of so great a friend, requested him eftsoons to cut his suspense, and make him know the man to whom he was so much bound.

"The rare virtue and courtesy of Anselmo Salimbino," saith he, "hath preferred cause of perpetual shame to all your friends and allies, and opened you the way, not only to be equal, but exceed him, in semblable merit."

Wherewith he departed with an infinity of conceits and constructions of the courtesy of his enemy; and being at his house in a secret gallery, void from all company or occasion of disturbance, began to discourse diversely of the accident; but chiefly what should stir up such generosity with inexpectable humanity in him, who, with his parents and all the power he might make, had been the only and mortal scourges of his whole house. At last, starting up as it were out of a dead sleep, or newly delivered from the mystery of some sudden qualm, began to remember some glees of friendship which he had heretofore noted in Salimbino on the behalf of his sister: which appeared chiefly in the often pale-walks and promenades he made by the gate of his palace; where, if by chance his eyes encountered with the view of Angelica, he forgot not to prefer a reverence and salutation, rather of an affectioned heart than a mind charged with grudge or any kind of enmity.

Whereupon he resolved immediately that the only beauty of his sister did plead for his life, and purchase his delivery; concluding withal in his mind that as the noble heart is soonest inclined to love, so, when true affection hath once made a break into the entrails of the valiant and princely mind, it is impossible but she should expose marvellous effects and fruits of honest virtue. Like as also, the imp derived of noble kind, and descended of the progeny of renowned predecessors, cannot so mask or cover his nurture and education, but the virtue of the mind will advance herself in the countenance with show of nobility in the face, and prefer a facility in that which the voice of the world hath not only judged impossible, but also absolutely persuaded that he would never be brought to do it, either of free consent or force of any awe or allurements. Wherein, for his part, because he would neither be surmounted in honesty, nor noted of any spot of ingratitude, determined

to revenge the good turn he had received with such prodigal recompense, that he would seem no less liberal in returning the interest of the benefit received than the other treble meritorious for the example of so rare a virtue.

Wherefore, having nothing worthy to present the friendship of Salimbino but himself and his sister, he determined to impart his present resolution with the fair Angelica, and after dispose themselves by mutual assent to make a tender and frank offer of that which was in them, to be employed on the behalf of him and his as he list to imagine the occasion. Wherein, because he was now in the country without intent to return to the city till the expiration of some four or five days, Charles, finding his conscience heavily charged with a debt on his behalf, thought to practise for him in his absence, as well as he was mindful of his late misfortune ; and thereupon procured his sister into a garden, far from any haunt or company to trouble them, where he brake with her in this sort :

" Amongst all the changes and conversions of mortal affairs, my dear sister, there is none a more familiar precedent of the malice of fortune than he that is touched with diversity of evils, nor any so great a pattern or example of her mobity as they that find often change of estate. And yet, for all that, we ought not to suffer any adversity to diminish the virtue and constancy of the mind ; neither is it our part to give so grievous a sentence of the state of man's mortality, as either to deny mercy to such as be in misery, or despair of compassion when ourselves be touched with affliction ; seeing that, as things mortal are full of change, and no man hath perpetual felicity, so there is no man certain of anything that he hath ; and God is bound to no time ; and fortune being slippery of herself, and not able to be holden against her will, doth never give so great felicity, but she enjoyeth a double penance with trouble of treble annoy in respect of the benefit. And besides, he that falleth from the uttermost spray, or height, of the highest tree, findeth less ease and more danger, than such as feel themselves taken from the low and shallow branches, supported upon the firm earth. All which I prefer unto you in this place, as well by a peculiar instigation and remorse of mind, restoring a new remembrance of the noble condition of our ancestors, the ancient glory of our race, and former renown of the house of Montanino, as also to stir

up in us both a fresh supply of sorrowful tears on the behalf of the late depopulation and utter ruin of the same.

" Wherein, for my part, as often as I behold the rich seats and stately buildings sometime the resident and ordinary places of abode of our fathers and grandfathers ; when my desolate eyes, glancing upon divers corners of this city, do feed upon the view of sundry scutcheons and pendles of our arms, bearing a special mark or badge of the antiquity of our family ; or that in the cathedral churches, or chief temples of this city, I peruse the inscription of so many stately tombs and perpetual monuments of marble, shrouding the bodies of so many noble knights and notable captains descended of the line of Montanino ; but chiefly as often as I put my foot within the entry of this palace, the very rest and last remainder of them whose authority only hath erst governed the state of this commonwealth—I feel myself so passioned with inward grief, and my heart within distilling drops of blood on the behalf of so great a disaster, that I wish, more often than I am heard, to be taken away from the dolorous regard of such wretched desolation, to the end that I alone might not live as the odd relic or uttermost rest of our subverted house. And albeit we may challenge the first place in the beadroll of unhappy wretches, seeing our fortune hath exchanged our ancient felicity for a present life of extreme misery, yet, if there be any cause of consolation in adversity, we have reason to joy in the condition of our state ; chiefly for that we are not justly to be charged with imputation of evil or dishonest trade anyway ; and that, notwithstanding the raging malice of our fortune, with the force of poverty pinching extremely, the discourse of our lives hath so confirmed the generosity of our ancestors, that we kept the consent of all voices to be nothing inferior of the best of them in any respect of virtue or show of true nobility.

" For I have always endeavoured to observe this one rule and discipline of the renowned Emperor and Captain, Marcus Antonius ; who persuadeth that, as the height of estate ought not to alter the goodness of nature, so the froward disposition of fortune ought not to take away or diminish the constancy of the mind ; with this addition, that he beareth her malice best that hides his misery most. Besides, thus much dare I avouch of myself, that as I was never presented with the offer of any good turn, which I have not thankfully

requited to the uttermost ; so I have not been a niggard of anything I have on the needful behalf of my friend or other companion, detesting always that any jot of ingratitude should stain the reputation wherein I have lived hitherunto. For, as amongst a number of vices in men nowadays, the note of unthankfulness is no less detestable than any of the rest ; so, for my part, I wish the rigour of the Athenians' law upon him who seems either forgetful of the benefit passed, or unthankful to the friendship of him that brought succour to his necessity when he despaired of relief. Wherein, my dear sister, albeit you may happily imagine the cause of this long circumstance, yet can you give no certain judgment of the end or conclusion, nor divine rightly the meaning of the mystery which I purpose to reveal unto you.

" The threatening peril which erst hovered to cut in sunder the fillet of my life, is of so late a time that I am sure your mind hath not yet dismissed the remembrance of so fearful a tragedy ; neither have you forgotten, I know, how (as it were by special miracle) I was bought out of the hands of the executioner of justice, and redeemed from the rigorous sentence of the partial senate, without the assistance of any of my parents or allies, by either simple offer of word or effect. Wherein, as I am warned by this experience not only to put small confidence in any of my kinsmen hereafter, but also to repose no assurance at all in their flattering show of feigned face, so I have tasted of so great a pleasure at the hands of him who never deserved well of me—nor I cause to imagine any one drop of humanity in him on my behalf—that, if I do right to his virtue, I have reason to admit him not only among the fellowship, but also the first and chief, of my dear friends. For being pressed so much with the iniquity of the time, with fresh assaults of new afflictions, and forsaken with all of my nearest friends, I had reason to imagine, and cause to fear, that the only malice of our mortal enemies (for the extirpation of the whole stock and root of our race) had been the workers of my last trouble and danger of death.

" But, good sister, in this distrust I have abused the virtue of our late adversary, deserving to endure penance for entering into conceits of conspiracy against him whose late benefit (exceeding the imagination of all men) hath made me bound to honour the remembrance of his name with a debt of duty, so long as nature shall fan in me the breath of life.

For in place where I feared most danger, I found most safety ; and where I expected least surety, I encountered most assurance. And that hand, which I attended only to give the fatal blow of my destruction, hath not only removed all occasions or offers of present peril, but become the chiefest pillar and prop of mine honour and life hereafter. Wherein, because you shall be partaker of the plainness of my tale, as well as you have used patience in the hearing of the circumstance, it is Anselmo Salimbino, the son and heir of our ancient persecutors, who hath made so manifest a declaration of his affected zeal towards our house, that, in taking your brother out of the hands of the unrighteous senate, and present danger of peremptory destruction, he hath seemed so lavish of his liberal mind that, in place of seven hundred florins, he hath paid a thousand ducats for the ransom of him who judged him the most cruel enemy of the world.

" What argument of noble heart is this, or how seldom doth a man encounter such rare fruits of virtues ? Friends, knit together by a special league of amity or mutual vow of friendship, do ofttimes make the world wonder of the sundry fruits and effect of constancy which appeareth between them ; but where the mortal enemy, being neither reconciled, nor required nor demanding any assurance for the pleasure he doth, payeth not only the debt of his adversary, but restoreth his state when he is at point to perform the last of his fatal summons, I think it exceeds all the consideration of such as use to discourse upon the doings of men. I know not what title to give to the act of Salimbino, nor how to term this his courtesy, if not that his doings deserve a better meed than the renown of Damon and Pythias, or other most loyal friends, whom the writers do favour with such surnames of glory.

" But as I am a chief witness of his virtue ; so the example of his present honesty hath stirred up such an affected humour within me, that either I will die in the endeavour, or else I will be equal, if not able to exceed him, in the return of his liberality. Wherein, being justly bound to engage the best part in me for the recompense of that good turn which gave increase to my life, I am to crave a special assistance of you, sister, for the complot of the device which I have already imagined, and fully resolved to perform ; to the end I may be only bound to you for the acquittance of the liberality of Salimbino, by whose help you, that erst lamented the loss of

liberty and life of your brother, may now congratulate his health and happy delivery."

Wherewith the fair Angelica, fully resolved by this last report of her brother, that it was Salimbino which had surmounted all her parents and friends in the delivery of her only comfort and consolation of their whole house, made a frank promise of her aid in this sort :

" Like as, " saith she, " I was never able to imagine that your delivery was wrought by so rare a means, nor that our enemies (dissolving the remembrance of ancient quarrel) would retire to a care and conservation of the health and life of the Montanins ; even so, I think your debt is the greater by the authority of him that hath done the benefit, and more worthy of ample consideration than if the good turn had been done by any of your parents and allies. For the imitation of a virtue ought to exceed the example of the author, chiefly where the occasion is derived of such an unlikelihood that the compass of brain seems insufficient to imagine so virtuous an act. Wherein, for my part, if I were as able as I am willing, his courtesy should be returned at so large an interest, that himself should think his benefit nothing in respect of the recompense, and the world to witness the generosity of the Montanins. But having noway the assistance of fortune to present him with anything that may balance with the merit of his courtesy, and being besides a maid without access to his house, by reason of the small haunt I use with the ladies his kinswomen, I can do no more but yield honour to his virtue with secret thanks in my heart, with acknowledging the debt until we be able to discharge it with equal recompense. Albeit, brother, if you have devised the means wherein you account me necessary to be employed, doubt not of me in any respect, so that mine honour only be not distressed."

" Amongst an infinity of discourses appearing severally in my unquiet mind " (saith he) " I cannot rest upon any likely cause or means to work the effect of so rare a courtesy in this gentleman on my behalf, nor to procure him in so sudden a moment to break the bond of ancient grudge, and to convert his natural hate into a friendship without a second or comparison, if it be not the fire of a covert love, kindled of long time within the tender parts of his entrails, and suppressed with a wonderful grief to himself, till now that, encountering so convenient an occasion to set abroach the vessel of his

burning desire, with means to event the flame that will no longer smother but bolk out into open show, he makes open declaration of that which he can no longer conceal. Ah! wonderful force and virtue in love! who hath power to convert the mind oppressed with passion of choler into a disposition tractable beyond all expectation, and in one moment to change that wherein all men judged an impossibility of conversion. It is only thy beauty, Angelica, with respect of other thy perfections, which have transformed our late enemy into the person of a perfect friend. It is the general fame of thy honest and virtuous life that hath summoned Salimbino to deliver thy miserable brother, abandoned of all his friends, and in despair of any good fortune. O noble gentleman and heart of a king! lacking no kind of magnanimity, what means alas! have I to approach that honest liberality, whereunto thou hast bound me by so sure obligation? I live to serve thee, and am ready to die to do thee pleasure. Mine honour is reserved to be employed by thee, and my goodness and living attend thy summons, to dispose of them at thy pleasure. Thou hast, also, made such a stealth of my heart that only death is able to redeem it.

"What is there then remaining, but that you, Angelica, remove incontinent the veil of all superstition and unseemly cruelty, in disposing thyself to be thankful to him who hath won thy good-will by the wager and warranty of virtuous love; and who, as a first earnest penny of his service and duty towards thee, did present a thousand ducats for the ransom of mine honour and life: which, if they remain of equal care unto thee now as the abundance of thy late tears with dolorous regards did erst argue to all the world (whereof also thou gavest a chief declaration in thy free consent to sell mine inheritance for the redemption of my thraldom), stick not to dispose thyself now so frankly on my behalf, that I may revenge the favour which Salimbino hath done for me the respect of thy love, with a present no less precious and rare than his act is justly meritorious of perpetual fame in all ages? And as he refused not turn up the bottom of his coffers to ransom my liberty; so, lacking the consent of equal fortune to return his courtesy with semblable payment, let us make a present of your beauty; which, I am sure, he will not abuse anyway, considering that he wants no furniture of virtue which is necessary for the adorning of a noble heart.

Which, as it is all the means I have to make a counterchange of his benefit and bring me out of debt with him whose money lieth in pawn for the liberty of my life ; so, I beseech you, good sister, consider the justice of my request, and pronounce a resolution in such sort as, requiting that which is due to him, I may yield you alone all homage and hold my life only of you.

" But if your answer put me either in doubt or despair, of this means to make even with so true a creditor, assure yourself I will rather abandon both city and country, and disclaim the company of all my friends, than live amongst you with the name of an unthankful person, or be pointed at of the world not to requite so great a good turn as the delivery and saving of my life. Wherefore, seeing that in you alone consists the whole repose of your desolate brother, determine either his abode and company with you for ever, or else his departure within these three days, to waste the remainder of his wretched life in continual wander in foreign soils, with absolute intent never to set foot within any part of Italy hereafter."

Wherewith the poor Anglica became no less astonied and void of sense than if she had been of a sudden assailed with an apoplexy. Albeit, the passion of her mind, quarrelling so long within that her stomach seemed to pant as it were the breath of two little bellows upon a forge, brake out at last by a watery vent at her eyes, distilling whole rivers of tears, and restored her to the use of her speech, which she uttered to her brother in this sort :

" I have often read," saith she, " that it is easy for an innocent to find words to speak, and very hard for a man in misery to keep a temperance in his tale ; but I doubt I shall find, by a present experience of myself, that the defence of a prisoner is not only superfluous but also hateful, seeming rather to reprove than inform the judge. Wherein I am the rather persuaded, my dear brother, for that the terms of thy last request, depending upon issues of extremities, do argue both a justice to perform thy desire, and an incivility in the making so unreasonable a demand ; the one challenging a consent in me by the impression of nature and bond of dutiful zeal on my behalf towards thee ; the other charging thee with iniquity for the respect which thou wouldest have me to do. But seeing every request craveth a return of answer, and the greater

quality or condition the cause is of, the greater deliberation ought we to use—chiefly where it imports either the absolute breach or firm confirmation of the league of lineal consanguinity—I beseech you grant no less patience to the words of my reply than I have been contented to favour your vehement protestation with a dolorous silence. Neither let me any longer inveigh in mine answer than I shall seem to prefer good reason to justify my just complaint : the cause whereof doth march with more alarums of annoy through all the parts in me, than if I were presently pinched with the most grievous torments of the world ; seeing that my life, with the exposition of the same, is nothing in respect of that which thy importunities do labour to set abroach and put in vent, for the only satisfaction of a prodigal liberality. If the price of my life would suffice for the ransom of mine honour and appeasement of thy appetite, thou couldest no sooner imagine thy contentment than the same should be exposed on thy behalf ; neither would I take half the time to perform it which I have used in making the promise.

" I thought, alas ! the late delivery of my brother had brought to us all an undoubted dispense of further trouble, and that he had buried in the pit of his imprisonment all occasions of further disquiet. And who would have judged but, in the last assault and unjust offer of undeserved death, fortune had spit the uttermost of her poisoned malice ; and that in divesting herself from the theatre or throne of rigorous cruelty, she had also broken in pieces the bloody arrows wherewith of so long time she hath persecuted our desolate house, and pronounced truce at last to the weary miseries of the wretched state of the Montanins ? But, alas ! unhappy creature that I am, I find, now, our destiny is rather deferred than our misery at an end ; seeing that that unjust goddess of unworthy revenge and most cruel step-mother, invading me with more fury than afore, doth threaten my young and tender years with more peremptory plagues than ever she thundered upon any of my former race. For if ever she pursued our fathers, grandfathers, or any predecessors, with mortal affliction or intent of utter ruin, it is now she hath chosen her time to put to her last hand to the extreme extirpation of the miserable relics and remainder of our poor house ; either by the wilful loss and perpetual exile of thee, my dear brother, or untimely death of thy desolate Angelica, who cannot make

prostitution of her chastity without the sacrifice and oblation of her miserable life. What is destiny, if this be not the consent and judgment of the heavens, with resolution to supplant the stock and grafts of our house; seeing that I, a simple girl, without force, void of assistance of age or experience, am constrained to admit the one of two evils; whereof the choice ought, and is able, to amaze the most wise and experienced creature that this day enjoyeth the benefit of mortal life?

"Alas! my heart faileth me, and reason, forsaken and fled from me, hath left my mind balancing in such confusion and contrariety of thoughts, that being brought to the extremity of two distresses of equal peril and indifferent terror, I doubt whether to commit my life to short and sharp penance, or prolong my days in pining dolour and secret care of mind. For the sentence which thou hast pronounced of both our estates is either to make a separation by extreme exile of my brother (who is no less dear in my heart than the tenderest part of mine eye, and in whom, next after God, I have reposed the whole assurance of my hope and consolation of life): or else, in conserving him, I see myself at point to be constrained to make merchandise (I cannot tell in what sort, nor for what price) of that precious treasure, which, once lost, is not to be reclaimed by any means; and, for the guard whereof, all women of upright mind, honouring virtue or desirous of reputation, ought rather to expose themselves to a thousand mortal perils and hazards of death, if nature and life were able to abide so many encounters, than to suffer one spot of infamy to stain or corrupt this precious ornament and gift of chastity. Which, as it is the only support and decoration of the life of an honest woman—so for a contrary, she that loseth the possession of so rich a jewel or divesteth herself of the title and crown of so great a glory, although she seem to live and keep place among other creatures, yet is she dead in effect, and her life recorded in the book of black defame as a witness against herself in the latter days, and in the meantime a continual reproach and object of shame to such as she leaveth to succeed her in kindred or name.

"How can that lady or gentleman march amongst the crew of virtuous dames, whose honour is either in doubt or reputation in decay, by the loss of her honour, but that the blood of shame, appearing in all parts of her face, will not

only discover her fault, but makes her weary of her life by the remorse or remembrance of so foul a forfeiture ? How could the daughters of the Emperor Augustus seem justly meritorious of the title of true nobility, or worthily deserve to be called the children of such a father, after their sundry villainies and lascivious trade of living had despoiled them of the gifts and ornaments of virtue, presenting them (to the eyes of all the world) as creatures not worthy to have the common air to breathe upon them ? What honour had Faustina in wearing the imperial crown upon her head ; seeing she had lost the crown and garland of chastity, by her disordered and dishonest life ? Sure she ought not to enjoy the breath of life, nor participate with the presence or benefit of the earth, that makes less store of her honesty than of the dearest part belonging to her soul or body ; neither is she worthy to be admitted amongst the fellowship of virtuous Dames, that departeth with so precious an ornament at other price than the exchange or loss of her life. Notwithstanding, the writers of former time have done manifest wrong to diverse simple women, whose virtue in preserving their honest name with true title of pudicity, deserveth rather an everlasting remembrance with notes of universal praise in pillars of eternity, than to be buried without pomp in the tomb of dark oblivion.

" Ah, dear brother ! what is become of thy ancient generosity and virtue of mind which heretofore thou hast exposed on the behalf of the honest and chaste ladies of thy kindred and race ? Hast thou converted that care and curious zeal, which hitherunto all men have noted in thee on my behalf, into a present intent to take away my life and renown after my death ? Because thy perversed fortune hath deprived thee of the most part of thy possessions and livings, wilt thou, therefore, that I make like sale of mine honour, which I have kept hitherunto with so great watch and diligence ? Wilt thou, my dear brother, that Anselmo do triumph, with more glory in the victory of my virginity than if he had constrained the rest and remainder of our miserable race to pass by the edge of his murdering sword ? Remember alas ! that the hurts and diseases of the soul be far more vehement and of a contrary disposition to them which afflict and annoy the body. And is it I, unhappy and thrice wretched girl, that must do penance for the offences of us all ? Is this the justice of the gods or rigorous doom of my angry destinies ?

If the heavens have resolved my ruin, why do they not rather commit me to fatal execution than present me upon the altar of filthy immolations or offerings to the devouring goddess of filthy lust; and to appease the appetite of a young man, who, peradventure, desireth no other prey than the spoils of my honour?

"How happy was the noble Virginia of Rome, who was slain by the hands of her own father, to avoid violation of her body by the lascivious Emperor Appius, the common enemy to the honour and reputation of all honest ladies! Alas! why stayeth my brother to purchase like renown by performing semblable execution upon me, rather than of his own mind to become the infamous minister of my life, ready to abide the danger of dishonest force—if God become not the protector of His servant, and take my cause into His hand? Why doth death defer to do his duty, or stay to dip the end of his venomous dart in the congealed blood of my dying spirit, and dispatch me with speed to visit the shadows of my happy predecessors; who, understanding my present distress, cannot be void, I am sure, of passion on the behalf of my wretched extremity? Why did not God and nature give power to the midwife to smother me at the instant that her cursed hands received me from the womb of my mother, rather than, in preserving my life with the milk of tender nurture, to make my youth subject to sundry sorts of affliction, and now, in the age and expectation of quiet, to present me the choice of two of the most mortal evils in the world? What counsel have I to assist me in so doubtful a case? Or which way can I turn me, where I am not indifferently assailed with remorse on the behalf of my brother's request, and shame, with desperation, in the simple remembrance of the act? Alas! shall I lose him whom nature and law of kind have named the one half of myself? And to commit the effect of his demand is no less damnable afore God than if I did violence and force against myself with mine own hands. Neither have I remedy or reason to eschew either of these evils, but by the assistance of thee, O cruel Atropos, whom I beseech, with the last tears of this complaint, to whet thy fatal knife and shred in sunder with speed the twist of my wretched days; lest, in preventing thy slackness or slender haste, these hands of mine undertake to supply thine office with unnatural revenge of my present sorrow."

Wherewith her tears and sighs ceased upon a sudden, and her tongue faltering in her mouth, her complexion of face was also converted into a pale and ghastly regard, in such sort as the passion of this trance, stopping the conduits and course of her breath, she seemed to have as little feeling or show of life as the seat whereon she sat. Which when Charles beheld, with resolution that the mystery contained neither vision, nor dream, nor charm of deceit, but that his sister had been as utterly without hope of recovery, as she seemed senseless and without breath, overcome with dolour and despair to live after her whom he only had preferred to so wretched a death, fell upon a sudden from the place where he sat upon the ground, without moving either hand or foot. The noise of whose fall restored Angelica to some little rehalation and use of breath, recovering in like sort the opening of her eyes with a general motion and feeling in all her parts; and being thus at liberty of free consideration, her eyes immediately disclosed the piteous estate of her brother, whom she judged now to have delivered her of further care to perform his request. Wherein, seeing a general retire of all his senses, and only view of his dead body remaining to increase her dolour, she stood at the point to use the same revenge of herself that Thisbe did when she found her friend dead. But finding his body warm, with some argument of recovery, she forgat not the use of any medicine wherein she judged virtue to reclaim life. And falling withal flat upon the body of her dead brother, she began to curse her fortune and accuse the stars of cruelty; inveighing withal against the slender friendship of herself towards him who made no conscience to offer to die, to preserve his patrimony and inheritance only for her sustentation. In the end, by the application of certain medicines and odoriferous smells, sometime sprinkling cold water upon his face, dropping vinegar into his mouth, and sometime rubbing his temples and pulses, with other sleights to revoke him that is but half dead, she brake the bed of his trance, opening a vent to utter the course of his breath. Wherewith, also, his eyes disclosed and challenged their wonted light, beholding with doleful regards his desolate sister; who, seeing all his parts replenished eftsoons with vital motions, that he was in case to understand and give judgment of her words, said unto him:

"Seeing my mishap is so great that she will admit no

dispense of her malice, and thou, dear brother, so wholly resolved in thy wilful imagination that I must yield to thy summons, and become the minister of the sentence of thy heart, more prodigal and bountiful than is convenient by the consent of reason, I am content to become thankful according to thy desire, and more ready to perform thy request than thou hast reason to exact so much upon me. Wherefore, do away thy desperate regards and looks, not unlike to him that is plunged in a passion of trembling fear, receiving with gladness the present offer of thy careful sister, who here presents herself the handmaid of thy will; giving thee full commission to dispose of this poor carcass at thy pleasure, and make a present of it to such as thou accountest thyself so greatly indebted unto. Only I am to warn thee of one thing—wherein thou canst not note me of any mislike by justice, because the integrity and virtue of my intent defends me from imputation that way,—and which, also, I give thee absolute assurance to perform—that is, being once discharged of thy authority, thou shalt use no more power to restrain me from doing the thing which my mind hath already decreed; protesting unto thee by the right hand of Him that governeth the universal globe, that, as no man shall touch Angelica but in sort and order of marriage, so, if I be committed to a further force, thou and all the world shall perceive that I have a heart will enharden these hands to make a sacrifice of my life to the chastity of these noble ladies, which heretofore have rather desired to die than live with a note of infamy or dishonour. For as my soul shall never stand in hazard of grace by the villainy of any act which my body shall commit by free consent, even so if this carcass be forced to violation, I doubt not but the integrity of my mind will purchase a privilege against all purgatory of my soul, witnessing in the other world mine innocence and invincible heart."

Wherewith she renewed the alarum of her sorrow with a fresh supply of sudden tears; with such abundance and impetuosity of dole that a man would have thought that the whole humour and moist parts of her brain had been drained and dried by the surges of continual tears which ceased not to fall from her watery eyes. Her brother, for his part, albeit he grieved with the desolation of his chaste sister, yet the joy he conceived in her present consent to his demand took away the passion of that sorrow, feeling, as it were, some

secret instinct or forewarning of the happy success and effect of the liberal offer of Angelica; to whom he excused his importunity in some sort after this manner:

"I was never so greedy of life," saith he, "but I could be content rather to renounce nature and die than to solicit thee in any respect which might bring thy honour or reputation in peril of infamous interest; neither would I live to see, and much less be partaker of, the thing that anyway seems to turn thee to displeasure: which thou shouldest always have found by effect and touch of finger, if this liberal courtesy of our enemy had not procured me to wrest thee to that which honesty denieth thee to grant, and I unable to demand without great wrong to thy virtue and no less prejudice to mine own honour. And, as the fear I have to be noted of ingratitude hath taken away all respects of honour or honesty to us both, so the virtue and noble heart of Anselmo doth not only offer an assured argument of hope, but also presents absolute cause of firm belief, that the only displeasure thou shalt find in this enterprise will appear when thou art first presented unto him. For it is not possible that he should use villainy on the behalf of her, the only regard of whose love hath made him make no conscience to hazard the displeasure of his parents and chief friends; not refusing withal, without suit or importunity, to deliver him whom he hated, and had power to put to what vengeance he would."

Here may be noted the operation of two extremities of several dispositions, natural zeal and fraternal duty quarrelling with womanly shame, and reason maintaining contention within herself. Angelica knew and confessed that her brother did no more than he ought, and that she was also leviable to the same bond and obligation of duty; and, on the other part, the estimation of her honour, with regard to defend her chastity, supplanted such dutiful respects of nature, and forced her to an integrity of judgment in that which she accounted both unjust and unlawful. Whereupon, resolving to observe both the one and the other, and seem chiefly to be thankful to the demand of her brother, she determined to discharge him of the debt towards his long enemy and late friend; with intent, notwithstanding, rather to die by the stroke of her own hands than villainously to lose the flower of that which made her life famous and of greater renown than the most part of the ladies of that city.

But the virtue of this Salimbino is of more rare singularity, and deserveth a greater commendation, than the continency of Cyrus, sometime King of Persia ; who, fearing a force of enticement to lurk under the flattering beauty of the fair and common Panthea, would never suffer her to be brought into his presence, lest her wanton regards should make him abuse the renown of his ancient honour and break the sacred devotion which all men ought to use in marriage, with violation of his faith confirmed by former vow to his wife. For Anselmo, enjoying the presence with free commandment over her whom he loved no less than his own life, did not only abstain to abuse the bountiful gift of his fortune, but also declared an effect of more nobility and virtue of mind than the said Cyrus ; as you may note in the next act of this history attending his present discovery.

For, as the Montanino and his sister had divided their deliberation into certain points, with abridgment at last of their long discourse, and that the fair Angelica had stated the source of her tears, with expectation of the end of that which they had but now begun, Anselmo repairs from the country to his palace in the town. Whereof, at eight of the clock in the evening, Don Charles received advertisement and without delay of further time willed his sister to attire herself in the best order she could. With whom, and only one man (to carry a lantern of slender light), they went to the lodging of Salimbino, whose servant by chance encountered them at the palace gate of his master, not without astonishment to see them there with desire to speak with Seigneur Salimbino : who, understanding what company the Montanin brought with him, was not forgetful for his part to descend with expedition, having carried afore him two staff torches giving light, till he came even to the gate. Where, omitting no kind of courtesy in receiving the brother, he was barred (as it seemed) to expose any show of service on the behalf of her whom he chiefly desired to honour ; but standing as it were a man enchanted, or some hermit in expectation to hear the answer of his oracle, was no less astonied with the view of his new guests than if he had suddenly dropped out of the clouds.

Which confusion and trouble of mind was immediately espied of Don Charles ; who as he imagined, without great study, that the presence and beauty of his sister stirred up the

perplexity of Salimbino, so he went about to break the amaze with these words : " Sir," saith he, " we have cause of special conference with you, which requireth neither public audience nor other witness than ourselves." Wherewith he offered them his chamber, and became their guide thither with more show of duty than desire to be entreated ; and leading his dear Angelica by the hand, passed through the hall into a certain gallery, furnished with riches and accoutrements belonging to the greatness of his estate. Where, being set in rich chairs and seats of honour, and the place void of all company, saving the presence of the two simple clients and merciful judge, Don Charles Montanino rose from his place and spake to the other in this sort :

" Albeit the offers of servitude be always most hateful to freemen, and that the noble heart can hardly brook to strike sail for any summons of adversity, yet the bond of a good turn, or benefit already done, levieth such alarums of remorse to the mind environed with virtue, that she forceth not only an equal consideration and recompense, but also claimeth a continual remembrance and thankful recordation in him who was first partaker of the benefit. Wherein as I find myself specially touched, above all that ever was blessed with friendship not looked for in this world, so, Seigneur Salimbino, I hope you will excuse me, if, in the first place of my catalogue of thanksgiving, I honour you (contrary to the laws and customs of our commonwealth) with the title of Lord and Master ; seeing the virtue of yourself, declared in the greatest distress that ever hath or could happen unto me, doth not only yield you by justice such title, but also challengeth at my hands a bond of no less dutiful and continual service towards you, than you expect of the most drudge and slave that followeth your train. For what disposition is more detestable than the note of unthankfulness ; or wherein are we bound to so frank and prodigal an exposition of ourselves, and all that we have, as in the remuneration and return of the pleasures we have received by strangers ? Which I could enlarge with credible authorities of elder days, and confirm by familiar experience of our age, saving that, in supplying the time with repetition of antiquities, I should defer yet longer the doing of that which I chiefly desire to perform.

" But grieving above all things that in the view and

remembrance of their virtues I find myself far unable to be equal or exceed any that ever were renowned or noted to be thankful (wherein, albeit I have just cause to cry out of the malice of my fortune ; not for bringing me so deeply in your debt—which I think was wrought by general consent of the heavens—but for that she hath lent me such slender choice of means to requite so great a courtesy), yet, in appealing to the virtue of your mind, I doubt not to make you understand the greatness of my desire, and whether ingratitude be anyway harboured in the heart of this poor gentleman ; who, having but himself and the chaste will of his sister (being both preserved in entire by the only assistance of your favour), makes here a present of ourselves and all that belongeth unto us, with commission, sir, to dispose of our lives, livings, and honour, in any respect it shall like you to employ them. And because I am more than half persuaded that the only respect of Angelica hath kindled the first coals of your desire, causing a conversion of the hate which descended unto you by inheritance, into a disposition to love that which your predecessors despised mortally ; and for that, by the heavy clog of our extreme misery, and hard condition of state, we are not able to shun the name of unthankful, but by the assistance of her that first procured the debt ; she, I say, who forced your liberality on my behalf is here, a ready pawn for the satisfaction of that which I confess to owe unto you. It is, sir, my sister whom you see afore you ; who, to absolve the bond of us both, doth yield herself unto you with free submission of her honour and life at your pleasure. And I, being her brother, having her full and free consent in my power, do make you a present of her, bequeathing you no less property than either I or she hath of herself, with authority to dispose of her as you think good ; doubting not but you will accept the offer and respect the gift, according to the value, with remembrance from whence it came, and in what sort it ought to be used."

Wherewith, not tarrying the reply of the other nor to bid his sister farewell, he flung down the stairs and went immediately to his own house.

If Anselmo were indifferently amazed at the first arrival of both the Montanins, or astonied with the oration of her brother, it is now that he is double perplexed, both with the sudden departure of Don Charles, and also to see in his

presence the effect of the thing he only desired, and never was able to imagine, and much less durst enter into hope to have it come to pass. Wherein, as he was no less glad than he had cause, being in the free contemplation and company of her whose beauty and virtue he accounted above the respect of all commodities and pleasures of the world, so he laboured of semblable dolour on the behalf of the passion and secret sorrow of mind which he noted in her touching her present change of estate ; the same forcing him also to a firm persuasion that the accident past proceeded rather of the generosity, or too much shew of courage and virtue, in the heart of the young man, than by consent, or any contentment at all, to the fair Angelica : whom, at the same instant he took between his arms, and proffering certain chaste kisses, dried her watery eyes of tears, which ceased not to drop with great abundance, preferring unto her this kind of short consolation :

" If ever I felt, or desired to understand, with what wing did fly the inconstant goddess, which the poets term the change and variety of the affairs of the world, it is now, good madam, that I am presented with such a manifest and strange proof, that I dare scarcely believe that which I see in offer afore mine eyes. For if the only respect of you, and the service which my heart hath vowed and sworn unto you, hath constrained me to dissolve the bond of extreme hate, which by request of my parents, I have been enjoined to bear to you and your house ; and in that devotion, have delivered your brother, as you know, from death ; I see fortune denieth me the triumph of the victory, for that your brother hath surmounted me in honour and virtue. And now do I see that, as the flattering glee of an uncertain fortune ought not to alter the goodness of the disposition, so adversity is not able to corrupt the virtue of the noble mind ; nor, when the good turn is done, the memory of the benefit is not hateful to the thankful man. For albeit my example deserveth commendation for that I opened the way and became, as it were, your brother's guide, giving the first earnest penny of humanity between us, yet his imitation seems meritorious of treble praise ; for that he hath not only acknowledged my courtesy and returned it with double interest, but also laboured to exceed me in the true effects of sincere nobility. Wherein, for your part, being my vassal by your own consent and special gift of your brother, albeit you have more reason of doubt,

than cause to repose assurance in my fidelity, for that our new reconcilement is not yet confirmed with any continuance of long time, nor our amity justified by but one simple proof or experience of late, yet shall yourself be judge, and the whole world witness with you, that my heart is no less free from corruption than far from dishonest or evil intent on your behalf; and that I pursue but a consummation of that which God hath given as a divine sacrament and holy law amongst us.

"Wherefore," saith he (with a fresh charge of honest kisses), "do away, good lady, your tears of present dole, and despair no more of the perfect loyalty of your servant; who will deal no worse with you, having you in his power, than at such time as he languished on your behalf and durst not discover the desire he had to do you service. Neither shall your brother repent of his courtesy, nor you in consenting to obey him. For, albeit you are mine by peculiar grant and mutual accord, and that your fortune hath given me such scope of authority over you that your honour weigheth only in the balance of my disposition, yet the respect of mine own reputation, and honour that I owe to your virtue, doth defend you from other injury at my hand than in making you the only mistress of my heart, to crave your consent in lawful marriage and society of wedlock; whereby the ancient mutinies and civil grudges shall not only retire and receive end, but our houses, rejoined eftsoons with this indissoluble bond of affinity between us, shall live hereafter in continual quiet, enjoying a mutual amity, more firm and strong on both parts than the former quarrels were fatal or full of mortality."

This news, staying the course of wonted tears, and dismissing withal all dolorous arguments or regards of sorrow, stirred up such a complexion or dye of natural white and red in the face of the fair Siennese, that she seemed rather a goddess sitting in her glistering throne than an imp or creature of nature; forcing such a vehemency of desire in the heart of Salimbino, that he was driven eftsoons to give a second charge of her goodwill, with a frank offer to make participation unto her of half his living and riches. Wherewith she presented him seemly reverence with a majesty of modesty and womanly behaviour, returning his request with thanks due to his liberal offer, with further assurance for her part to omit neither endeavour, nor diligence, nor declaration of duty, on the

behalf of him whom God hath reserved for her lawful husband and companion of bed. Wherewith, after they had spent some little moment in embracing one another, and certain kisses given and received reciprocally between them, Anselmo knocked for an old aunt of his, lying in his house, to whose charge and fidelity he committed the glory of his new conquest.

And finding the least moment of delay greatly hurtful to his desire, he dispatched immediately several messengers to his dear and nearest parents and friends ; who, obeying the expedition of his short summons, came immediately unto his house, where he requested their assistance of advice and company in the consummation of a business of great importance. Wherein, if they appeared willing, or liked of his request, he seemed, I am sure, to use above an ordinary celerity in the execution of his enterprise. And sending for his aunt, with her new charge and his dear Angelica, he repaired immediately (not without the great amaze of his friends) to the palace of the Montanin ; where, scarcely giving leave to the entertainments and proffers of court wherewith Don Charles saluted him and his company, he recited to his new brother-in-law, in the hearing of the rest, that as not long since he, with his sister, came to his lodgings with request to communicate with him in secret, so, for his part, he is now there afore him to reveal such things as he had determined since his departure, and that in the public audience and witness of that company ; which he had assembled of purpose, and to whom, with all the world, he intended to impart his rare honesty and virtue, with such revenge as himself meant to take upon them as seemed to honour him with the offer of any pleasure or surmount him in the gift of thankful dealing. Which words seemed to end as the whole company was set in order with expectation to see the effect of this mystery. And being all in silence, he turned his face with an oration to the multitude in these terms :

" Methinks I see you all in a wonderful amaze, with several imagination of my intent in procuring this assembly at so inconvenient an hour and in such a place ; where none of you all, my kinsmen and friends, nor myself hitherunto, have set foot to enter, without design to endamage or do some notable harm to the rest of them that remain of the Montanin line. Which astonishment I shall also suspend in you till the end of this short preamble, which I have preferred for the better

understanding of the part I mean to play. And if you will consider with regard of indifferent judgment, and weigh in equal balance the thing which is called good, in the hearts of such as, differing from the brutal sort, do follow the part of reason properly called spiritual, you shall see, by that means, that the generosity and high heart, grafted in us by our great mistress and first mother, Dame Nature, doth never cease to make show of several effects, sometime bringing forth one virtue, sometime making declaration of another ; which, also, do prefer their sundry fruits, according to the excellency of the noble spring and first source of the same. Wherein, also, this nobility of mind hath such a force and special privilege by her first founder, that, albeit all human things are framed of a metal of instability subject to change, yet is she only found firm and void of all revolution. And though she be one chief butt and mark whereat Dame Fortune doth loose her inconstant arrows, shaking her piercing darts against her on all sides, yet is she found so invincible against her assaults, that she is as void of power to move her as the blustering winds, forcing an incredible fury to the angry disposition of the sea, seem unable to stir the hard rock or stony mountain.

" Whereupon it followeth, that as the greatness of fortune with glee of infinite riches do lift up and make swell the heart of a villain or one of base condition ; so neither the sinister change of estate, nor any malice or ministers of poverty, can embase or make stoop the greatness of courage in them that are wrought in a contrary frame, or made of other stuff than the vulgar sort. For they keep always a majesty of their original, and observe in such sort the instinct of the blood whereof their ancestors were made noble, and gave them suck of the very milk of virtue, that, what despites or malicious summons soever fortune doth send them, the temperate argument of modesty in their complexion and countenance, with true effect and operation of true virtue of their mind, do sufficiently argue their condition in defying the threats of the world, and makes absolute declaration that under the veil of such misery is shrouded the heart deserving better allowance than the adversity which torments them. Herein consists the whole glory of the youth of the Persians and Medes, who, albeit were nourished and brought up amongst the herdsmen of their parents, yet gave they place to no country in magnanimity of mind. And who hath exceeded, or been equal, in

generosity or noble courage of heart to Romulus, the first founder of the proud city of Rome ? Yet he was assisted with no better education or training up than in caves and cabins of shepherds, and such as inhabit the plain and desert fields for the guard of their cattle.

" All which I have preferred unto you, my Lords and Ladies, as a special preparative to the peculiar praise and commendation of the undoubted nobleness of mind of Seigneur Charles Montanino and his sister, who, without prejudice or wrong to any, may well be termed the paragon for beauty and mirror of honest and chaste behaviour, above all the ladies and gentlewomen in our commonwealth. Whose house, as you know, hath been so oppressed with continual persecution that only they two are the last remainder of their whole race, standing, also, not long since at the point of extreme ruin and utter subversion for ever. Yet the imposition of such strange miseries could neither move any diminution of courage, nor stay of desire to expose an effect of that virtue and bounty which nature hath appointed to occupy the hearts of them that be true noble. Wherein as I see some justice to exclaim against the cruelty of our ancestors, for that the only respect of a small broil, happening by chance, hath moved them to thunder a most mortal vengeance of this so ancient and virtuous a stock ; so, for my part, being privy to mine own conscience (with remembrance of the wise admonition of the grave philosopher, saying that as of unlawful winning of the father comes just loss to the son, so he that makes himself a tyrant by force becomes oftentimes a slave by justice), I think it necessary not only to blow the last retreat of all grudge between us, but also work the effect and confirmation of a future amity for ever hereafter.

" And if the view of the ancient quarrels and mutinies of former time do stay your consent to present compassion of their case, yet let not the honest trade of life, civil behaviour and modest disposition of this brother and sister, depart without the due meed and hire of their virtue ; neither let us suffer their place in the senate to be empty or void of supply, that erst hath been furnished with the presence of the most noble and wise men of our city ; to the end that our example may serve as a precedent to the future time, in that the only respect of virtue, and not riches, makes us restore the decayed stocks of our commonwealth. Wherein, also,

we shall justly deserve the title of our high descent from the puissant and mighty Emperors of Rome ; who gave ever more honour to the virtuous poverty, than regard for commendation to the rich man converted into vice or abominable endeavours. But now, because I see you already forewearied with the length of a lingering suspense, desiring to know the cause of this great commendation of the Montanins, with request to abridge my tedious discourse, if you will lend me a little liberty to speak, with patience to hear the chief points of my protestation, the speedy end of my tale shall restore present quiet and contentment to your troubled minds.

" It is long since, I must confess (and yet the offence is neither mortal nor fault so heinous but it may be forgiven), that the beauty, with other parts of perfection, in the fair Angelica here present, so ravished my senses and robbed me of my liberty at one instant, that the only exercise which occupied my head day and night for a long time, was the sundry devices I imagined to discover unto her my martyrdom. Wherein I fed the hungry humour of my affection with such alarums and contrariety of conceits, that having by this means lost the necessary appetite of the stomach and usual desire of sleep, I felt such a diminution of nature and lively force through all the parts of me, that I was presented at one time with the choice of two most perilous evils in the world ; the one to die afore my time by suffocation of pining dolour, or else to yield to a deprivation of my senses and gift of understanding for ever. Wherein I was also pursued with the ready assistance of perplexed despair, for that I saw no means to make that seem easy wherein I judged so great an impossibility, chiefly by the grounded quarrels of our two houses. Whereby, albeit the war seems ended and the grudge half appeased between us, yet was I of opinion that there remained an equal desire in the hearts of us both neither to wish well the one to the other, and much less to abstain from further slaughter whensoever a new occasion should eftsoons fall out. Neither could these mortal impediments argue sufficient reason to diminish mine affection, but stirred up rather a treble increase of desire, according to the passioned mind enchanted with love ; who makes such as he possesseth more apt to desire, than able to attain to the effect of that which they wish, preferring always a simple likelihood in that wherein appeareth an absolute impossibility, to the end

to afflict their miserable lives with continual annoy. But as these extremities had filled my head full of despair, and committed me to a continual carefulness of mind—because I could neither stay the course of my affection nor encounter the object of my desire—behold! fortune entered into compassion of my state, assisting me with so ready a medicine for my great disease, that, when I was void of all expectation or hope of recovery, I was presented with a frank offer of my desired prey.

"For as it is not unknown to you all, that since the departure of eight or ten days the Lord Montanino here present, being accused afore the Senate upon certain penal statutes devised by our cruel state for the repeal of banished men, was awarded by judicial sentence to pay the forfeiture; which because he could not tender within the time, his greedy enemies forced the law to a more rigour than was necessary, in such sort as the executioner was ready to extend upon his body, for want of a supply of a thousand florins to choke the covetous humour of the magistrates: even so the view of his extremity stirred up such a remorse in my mind, that methought I was summoned by duty to prevent the destruction of him who was brother, and the only comfort, of her whom I had already proclaimed the sovereign lady and mistress of my heart. In which good vein of devotion, I paid the money and procured his delivery; who for his part divining, I cannot tell upon what occasion, that the beauty of his sister did work the effect of such a virtue in me, hath not only been thankful for the benefit, but also overcome me in honest liberality and true nobleness of mind, presenting me in the beginning of this evening at mine own house with a prodigal offer, not only of himself and all that he hath, but also of his sister, whom he left with me to use and dispose at my pleasure. Wherein, for end, I appeal to you all with one request, that in weighing rightly the gift of the one and offer of the other, you will consider of them both, and assist me immediately with your advice in what sort I may yield a due meed to such two precious merits, the one a most familiar pattern and precedent of true nobility, and the other a present of such price and value that the greatest prince in Italy could do no wrong to his greatness in yielding honour and homage to so rare a thing."

Whereupon he stayed his further discourse, giving place to the assistants for consultation of the case; which, albeit

they knew imported deliberate advice afore the resolution of judgment, yet were they in amaze what sentence to give; because they were neither privy nor partakers of the determination of him who had summoned their appearance there rather to witness the fact than decide the case, or impeach his resolute intent by a contrary counsel. The ladies, his kinswomen, were so moved to admiration with the majesty and other arguments of virtue in the fair Angelica, that they had passed judgment on her side; if they had not feared to be refused of him who wished their voice that way, and who only being touched above the rest most near the quick, dismissed their astonishment in revealing his own determination in this sort:

"Seeing you take so great a time to discuss so small a matter, with no less doubt to publish sentence of that which is already determined, let me abridge all arguments of further delay, in deciphering in plain words the thing which hitherunto I have communicated but by circumstance. You shall understand," saith he (in taking Angelica by the hand), "that having the regard of honour afore mine eyes, with desire to recompense at full the honesty and virtue of the brother, I am resolved to take thee, sister, to my dear and lawful wife (preferring by that means a perfect unity of that which long time hath lived in separation) and make of two bodies, erst and long disjoined, an equal will and entire mind; desiring all your consents in the consummation of this alliance, which seemeth rather the work of God than an effect of the counsel or diligence of man. For the law of marriage, being an institution of the Highest, and the thing wherein Christ first glorified Himself by miracle upon earth, is recorded in the infallible Book of His foreknowledge, to the end nothing chance which is not permitted and foreseen by the providence of the God of marvels; Who surely laid His hand upon thee, brother Montanino, in touching thee with distress and peril of life, to the end that my Angelica, being the only means of thy delivery, might also lay an immovable foundation of a mutual unity between our two houses; which, I hope, shall survive the length of time, and not end but with the last remainder of either of our posterities."

This conclusion, thus heard of the parents and kinsfolks of Salimbino, and canvassed a little in their several opinions, seemed at last of such reason and indifference to them all,

that they converted their conceits, which kept them occupied for a time, into a present disposition of wonderful joy and gladness, feeling in their entrails and inward parts (I cannot tell by what secret instinct of mind) an approach of indissoluble tranquillity on all parts, by the only conjunction of this new alliance. And albeit there was no equality of portion, and that the dowry of Angelica stood aloof from the revenues of her new consort, yet the virtue and gifts of grace appearing in her made her seem able to countervail him in any respect ; and his friends with one voice gave general commendation to the goodness of his fortune, for planting his affection in so virtuous a soul. Wherein, surely, they had good reason.

For marriage, being a law and holy sacrament given us from God as the only knot of mutual tranquillity between man and woman, ought to be embraced for the virtue and sincerity of the thing, and not abused with a regard of riches or other filthy promotions of the world. And he that in the choice of his wife respects chiefly her beauty and greatness of portion (besides a thousand petty mutinies that fall out in house-keeping) escapeth seldom without a spirit of grudge or civil dissension disturbing his quiet, with a continual humour of fretting disposition feeding his mind. For the glass of beauty retireth and giveth place to age, which also mortifieth the delight or desire of further pleasure ; and, on the other side, the woman, knowing her descent more noble and portion to exceed the wealth of her husband, forgetteth not to take heart at grace, and, decking her garland with all sorts of flowers of pride and disdain, seeks to govern and get the upper hand of him, who, as he is appointed her head by the words of Scripture and institution of nature, so he ought to keep a strait hand of the same bridle and rein of authority, using it as a check to restrain the desire of liberty in her that studieth to have him in subjection. Wherein I wish all bachelors and young men unmarried to be armed against so great a mischief with the experience of such their friends as they see touched with the like grief. And for my part, I lament the disquiet of them as would and cannot, or rather dare not, attempt a simple reformation in them who are born to bear the yoke of awe and commandment of their husbands.

Returning, therewith, to the sequel of Salimbino, who, working the last effect and consummation of his courtesy, gave the one half of his goods of all sorts in favour of the

marriage, adopting at the instant the Montanin as his brother-in-law and assured friend, with general substitution to all his goods, if he chanced to die without heir of his body, and having children, he conveyed unto him, by such assurance in reversion as the law could devise, that moiety which he gave in dowry to his fair Angelica ; whom, the Sunday following, he married, with pomp due to both their estates, to the universal contentment of his friends, and special quiet of the city, who had endured long affliction by the mortality and civil war of the two houses.

Such be the varieties happening in the success of our worldly affairs. Wherein, who will deny but that adversity sometime is necessary for men ? Seeing she doth not only force a wonderful remorse and reformation of life, but also works oftentimes an effect of that wherein appeared an absolute impossibility of conquest by any other means. And truly the virtue of this example discredits utterly the commendation of the ancient Romans ; amongst whom, as there chanced diverse times great enmities and grudge of mind, so there followed a speedy reconcilement, albeit not by such means as this frank atonement between the Salimbins and Montanins ; but some were reclaimed by the offer of promotion, some solicited by the voice of the whole commonwealth and confirmed by the present gift of some notable office, and others with a regard to peculiar profit ; not one of them all approaching near the magnanimity in the worst of these three.

Whereof the one, summoned by a passion of love, seemed to exceed nature in performing an exploit not able anyway else to be wrought to effect. And yet there be those, crying out against love, paint him in colours of rage, folly, and frenzy. But such are rather abused with their own conceits, than able to consider rightly the virtue of that impression. For love, in the noble heart, is no other thing than the true subject of courtesy, the fountain from whence distilleth the original of all civil and good order, the only means that moves us to moderation when we are inclined to cruelty or revenge, and the chiefest nurse and preserver of peace amongst men. Wherein, if some vile disposition happen to violate or pervert the laws of so necessary and ancient institution of nature, the virtue and subject itself yet ought not be touched with the cause of such fault, nor deserve to be noted of any corruption ; seeing such derogation proceeds by the abuse of him

that knoweth not the perfection of the thing. Which falls out also in experience in diverse other accidents ; which, being virtues of themselves, do lose their credit by the malice of such as abuse them villainously. Whereupon the good thing is often condemned by the folly of such as are ignorant in the perfection of the same.

In the other appears a rare disposition of a bountiful mind so far from the abominable spot of ingratitude, that his life was ready to be offered for the satisfaction and discharge of the courtesy, if the other had required it. Wherein, as you may see great effects of true magnanimity, and wherein a noble mind ought not to be overcome with the virtue of honest courtesy, so, touching the price of victory (I mean, which of the three is most meritorious of commendation, and deserveth to wear the garland), I refer the judgment to the indifference of such as, without passion or partiality, do use to note the chances happening to men.

You see a mortal enemy sorrowed for the misery of his adversary, but solicited thereunto (you will say) by the inevitable force of love, which also wrought his delivery. The other marched with the glory of a present so rare, that the greatest monarch of the world may be astonied with the remembrance of his prodigal bounty. The wonderful zeal and affection of the sister towards her brother challengeth no less praise than the rest ; who, albeit she had seen a proof of the courtesy of her enemy, yet had she no assurance of his modesty : notwithstanding, to discharge everyway her duty towards her brother, she laid her virginity upon the block of violation.

The first claimeth to be victor, because his last virtue in the marriage exceeds his former courtesy ; but he hath overthrown his enemy, and not won the field, so that he is not to enjoy the praise or price of the victory. The absolute resolution of the young lady to kill herself, if she were forced to dishonour against her will, takes away all glory and commendation from her, if the care to keep honour and virginity did not prevail above the preservation of life. The brother, and third of this crew, albeit this prodigal offer proceeded by compulsion of the former bounty of his friend, yet the nobleness of his mind was equal to the rest, and his virtue nothing inferior to either of the other two. And yet, if it were not the singular respect he had to return his benefit

with double interest, with care to be more than sufficiently thankful to his patron, I could diminish his glory.

Wherein, because the lamentable tragedy of two poor lovers summons me to discover their misadventure, with no less reason to furnish the stage with a declaration of their loyalty than your Ladyship hath already heard the whole discourse of the rare virtues in Sienna, I leave such gentlemen and skilful dames who take pains to scan this history to argue the cause at large, and resolve judgment at leisure, not doubting of your integrity in yielding the true title of triumph and glory to some one of the three whom you account most worthy to be crowned with the laurel of victory.

SECOND TALE

LIVIO AND CAMILLA

THE ARGUMENT

THERE is nothing, how good and profitable soever it appear, whereon attendeth not a discommodity to him that deals in it without discretion, together with a peremptory displeasure in receiving it contrary to the consent of good government. Wherein I may be assisted with sufficient confirmation in a daily experience of the ordinary meats, broths, and other confections, tolerated by physic for the sustentation of man : which, albeit be good of themselves, yet, being swallowed in gluttonous sort, they do not only procure a surfeit with unsavoury indigestion, but also, converting our ancient health and force of nature into humours of debility distilling through all the parts of the body, do corrupt the blood which of itself afore was pure and without infection. Even such is the disposition of love, whose effects, directed by reason (which ought to guide every action and doing of man), be not such enemies indeed to the quiet of our life, as necessary means to reform the rudeness of our own nature ; according to the authority of the poet, affirming that by love the rude man is reduced to a civility, the fool learneth wisdom, the coward becomes valiant, and the covetous niggard sets his purse wide open to his friend ; neither is there any kind of courtesy wherewith he that is in love doth not participate. But who makes an experience of the contrary,—I mean, without advice or judgment will throw himself headlong into the gulf of a foolish and cunning phantasy—escapes hardly without the reward which that frantic passion yieldeth ordinarily to such as are unhappily partakers of such infection. Neither is there anything more furthereth the ruin and decay of man, than suffering the eyes of our understanding to be sealed with such vanity as to imitate that as a glut of our greedy desires which nature hath enjoined to all estates to honour and embrace as a special virtue. And truly, methinks that that foolish and unfortunate crew might reserve the errors and destructions of others as special patterns and precepts to restrain the humour

of their own madness ; by the which (ere they be aware) they are led to the brink of mortal destruction. Albeit, the indiscretion of that miserable sort seems nothing unlike in comparison to these that, having long used the trade of theft and robbery, and seeing their companions pass by the sentence of a cord, lack grace notwithstanding to disclaim the wickedness wherein they have been nozzled so many years : neither is their plague (or rather just punishment) anything inferior ; for they, making a chief glory of that which is most imperfect in love, are either so subject to despair, or beastly assotted with the greedy encounter of the pleasure they find, that, procuring by their own folly and want of order the process of their fatal summons in the entry to their felicity, they are forced to resign, at one instant, their life and loathing contentment, of less continuance than the pains in love seem grievous to the mind that hath the gift to pass them over by reason.

And like as a vehement and inward grief of the mind (proceeding by the malice of a sinister fortune) is of such force to close the pores and conduits of the vital parts of man, that, cancelling the commission of life, the soul departs leaving the body without sense ; like power, I say, hath the vehemence of semblable gladness, which, occupying all the parts with a general joy (exceeding the strength of nature) makes the mind insufficient of force to withstand so great a passion : whereby, striking the sail of life, the body is seen to vanish as the candle lacking wax, or wick, or other matter assisting the flame which giveth light to the beholders. Whereof we have diverse authorities in the histories of antiquity ; as one of the daughters-in-law to the high-priest Eli, who, hearing of the death of her husband and the taking of the ark of the Lord, ended her life with the dolorous report ; the like happening unto her father-in-law, for the overthrow of the children of Israel by the infidels and uncircumcised. In like sort we have confirmation in diverse profane discourses of such as have yielded the ghost on a trance of unreasonable joy and laughing ; as Diagoras Rhodius and the philosopher Chilon, who, upon the news that their children had won the prize at the plays at Olympus, embraced their happy fortune with such exceeding gladness, that upon the place and present they yielded again their term of borrowed years. Also a foolish Roman woman, hearing of the death of her son in a battle fought against the enemy, digested it with great

constancy, but seeing his safe return from the field, contrary to her expectation and former news, she was so assailed with superfluity of gladness, that, in place to congratulate his delivery from the peril of war, she died in embracing him, as of a passion of dismeasured contentment.

Which argueth sufficiently the folly of them that in any degree bestow either joy or sorrow so near their heart, that, besides the destruction of the body, they become the unnatural murderers of their own souls. Wherein, with what enamel soever they seek to guild and colour such vices, yet can they not be excused of an humour of madness, proceeding of a vain brain, exposing fruits according to the spirit or guide that possesseth them. Neither is there any commendation at all due unto such as through impatience give end to their life by despair, with what title or surname of constancy the fond philosophers of old time do baptise those actions of mere fury and frenzy. Whereof, as the miserable end of these two lovers yields sufficient testimony, dying both in one hour of diverse accidents, the one of a dismeasured joy, the other of a passion of desperate sorrow; so, because the discourse is of undoubted truth, I wish it might move credit to the reader, and counsel to all men to eschew the like inconvenience derived of semblable occasion.

At such time as Alexander the Sixth, surnamed Borgia, supplied the papistical seat at Rome, dwelt in Cesena a young gentleman called Livio with his sister Cornelia; near unto whom was the house of a knight bearing the name of Renaldo, having a son called Claudio, with a daughter Camilla; which two young damsels, by reason of neighbourhood and continual nurture together during their infancy, retained a league of such mutual familiarity and conversation, that their society, with often intercourse together, seemed no less than if nature had made them the children of one father. Wherein, as Renaldo and his wife rejoiced not a little on behalf of their daughter, for that Cornelia was accounted to exceed the rest of young ladies in honest behaviour and gifts of virtue; so, if it had not been for a froward disposition of Claudio (who grudged without cause the company of Livio), this conversation and haunt of the girls had seemed of easier continuance. Albeit as his presence often gave impediment to their meeting,

so his absence restored their interview ; in such sort as he was no sooner departed to perform his father's affairs at Rome or elsewhere, but his sister forgat not to visit her dear Cornelia ; passing their petty follies and recreations of honest delight, most commonly at the lodging of Livio, for that there was neither awe of father nor other authority to control their exercise ; which, for the most part, was every afternoon to dress fine banquets, striving to exceed one another in curiosity and cunning, with a thousand other conceits and merry chat of housewifery. Which seemed of no less pleasure to them than the pomp of wanton delights wherewith princes and other great ladies are respected, served, and honoured, and sometime courted, by a crew of venerian and carpet knights, with divers importunities and unseemly requests of love ; who, as he is an humour of infection derived from the corrupt parts in ourselves, and yet common to us all by nature, so is he chiefly furthered in the execution of his evil by an usual frequentation and haunt of parties.

Whereof may be noted a most familiar experience in this Livio, who, during the practice of the two girls, took such view of the beauty and behaviour of Camilla (seeing her only go and come to the chamber of his sister) that he began to sip of the cup of affection, no less than Dido kissing Cupid under the figure and semblance of the little Ascanius, son to the valiant Aeneas. Neither could he be so constant to repulse this first apprehension ; but (maugre his heart) he yielded to the summons of his affection, and at the first assault surrendered the fortress to him that offered the war. Who at the first entry made himself lord over the free parts of this prisoner, and rampired himself so strongly within the interior of his mind, that he was not only in one instant the governor of his thoughts, but also, directing his whole doings by the dial of his discretion, fed him only with the unsavoury juice of torment and continual passion ; in such sort as, not knowing whether he should encounter a return of reciprocal glee, he seemed to love upon credit, taking pleasure in entertaining his uncertain thoughts and vain delight of his flattering fancy. Wherein he had had some reason, if the conference of Camilla had kindled the coals of this affection in his mind (for that, as I have said, frequentation breedeth first the desire, so words have force to further the effect of diverse things which otherways we could never bring to pass), or if he had been

answered with a sympathy or equality of friendship by her on whose behalf he committed such fond idolatry.

But what? When a man hath once set abroach the humour of his folly, he accounts it a great simplicity to desist afore he hath performed every effect and suggestion of the blind guide that governeth his unruly will. For this young pigeon of the first plume, hatching in the secret of his mind that which he durst not discover, took singular pleasure in the repetition of the delight which he desired; imagining that Camilla had cropped of the same herb whereof he had swallowed both the leaf and root, and that she was no less zealous on his behalf, than he the slave forced and enchanted by virtue of her glistering beauty.

Wherein, as desert and solitary soils be harbours most convenient for such as be occupied with passion, so he began by little and little to disclaim all company and places of assembly, and accounted his greatest felicity to discourse with his thoughts in the open and barren fields; where only the air did witness his dolour and the birds partake of his hollow sighs. Wherein, walking one day (among the rest) along a coppice, or grove of short wood, nourished by the moisture of two or three pleasant channels, distilling from certain rocks builded by nature upon the height of the mountains, which favoured his doleful complaint with an echo of semblable dole, he exposed an effect of his passion in these sorrowful terms:

"What angry doom of the gods or sinister permission of the fates is this," saith he, "which, depriving my heart of his ancient liberty, hath made a transport of my thoughts upon the image of a beauty that resembleth the clearness of the heavens, and eclipseth whatsoever is perfect or fair upon earth? From whence proceeds this new authority, which, commanding the strongest part in me, seemeth to force a desire to wish that whereof mine eyes have already given judgment touching the beauty of the only mistress of my thoughts? What sudden alteration is this to transform my liberty into a servile thraldom, and yet of more delight and contentment than if I were pronounced the only sovereign and lord of the whole patrimony? Alas! I think the accident, exceeding the compass or computation of nature, imparts his power and title with the celestial authorities above; for mine eyes do daily feed upon the presence of

Camilla and encounter a continual view of her company. But the true effect of that which is perfect, under the corporal veil cannot be discerned but by figure and force of imagination ; the which, ravishing my senses, hath made me the slave of her, who, living without subjection or touch of passion, may, peradventure, convert the symptoms of my present grief into a conceit of little or no regard, with a disdain of the offer of my affection. To what end should I endeavour to gather the fruit, when the leaves will grant me no favour ; or who will bend his devotion towards the shrine, if the saint close the gates of compassion against him ? In like sort, what pleasure have I to embrace a shadow, when the body disdaineth my homage and offer of service ; unless there be a felicity in the life of the chameleon, living with the breath or air of the skies ? For, in fearing to discover my grief, I have cause to despair of the remedy ; and in feeding only upon vain and uncertain imaginations, I am to expect no other contentment but such as distilleth from the fountain of such simple favours, that now I find them the happiest kind of creatures to whom nature hath imparted such rude shape and gross understanding, that they cannot in any sort receive the impressions of love ; where we, alas ! that are derived of a more delicate mould, and enjoined to a generosity of spirit above the rest, are barred the benefit of all felicity, in admitting as a principal pleasure the thing which torments us more mortally than if we were persecuted with all the afflictions of the world.

" Herein appears the folly and want of discretion in man, doting upon the vanities and passions which of himself he plants in himself, without foreseeing how unable he is to restore his quiet after he be once attainted with the humour of such corruption. But what ? May any one man be assisted with special privilege in that which nature hath made common to us all ? I mean, is it in the power of any to procure dispense from the danger of love, or stay the coals kindled in our entrails to burst into blaze or open flame ? No ! no ! for a million that have fallen into the snares and perils of affection, I have not known anyone that hath disposed of himself and thoughts otherways than according to the discretion of him that seeks to mortify our quiet and triumph in the servility of us wretches.

" Yet, for my part, seeing there is no evil in embracing things that be fair,—for that (according to the orator) the fair

and good are so conjoined together, that, the one glorifying in the other, are confirmed both with equal estimation—why should I not pursue the love of my dear Camilla ; whose exterior regards argue a greater virtue than to refuse the offer of my simple and honest service, supported with an intent of unfeigned loyalty so long as nature shall assist me with one moment of time in this world ? But, alas ! what reason hath she to grant to that which I dare not demand ; or how should she satisfy my request being altogether ignorant of my meaning ? And seeing by concealing my desire, my grief is grown to an aggravation of torment, why stay I to disclose the cause ; to the end I may either receive the sovereign cataplasm for my sore, or else the last and fatal syrup which may send me to complain mine evil in the other world ? ''

Wherein, as he made here his plot to communicate his love with his mistress, so the very presence of Camilla, and fear to offend her, took away the effect of that resolution, converting his complot into a mystery of some dream or vision invisible. Whereby, what with the increase of his passion and fear to betray the occasion, his grief grew to a disease, presenting arguments of debility and diminution of strength, with loss of ancient colour in his face ; so far forth that he seemed not the same Livio which erst was so welcome into all companies, no less for his grace and perfection of nature than his gift of pleasant discourse ; seeing that now in so short a time he is so transposed into the habit and disposition of a melancholic and solitary hermit, that there appeared no less impossibility to have him assist any assembly, according to the commendable custom of nobility or youth of gentle descent, through all the franchises in Italy, than to mortify in one instant the fury of his solitary passion ; in such sort that the young ladies and gentlewomen, companions to his sister, began to descant of his coy and religious trade of life. Some of them, accusing him of foolish disdain, noted a sort of savage and haggard disposition ; and some, seeing as far into his disease as the physician into his water, referred the cause of this sudden change to the mortal and inevitable wounds of the cruel son of the fair Cypris. Wherewith Cornelia, troubled without measure that the alteration of her brother was the only wonder of the multitude, grieving no less, for her part, than the rest seemed amazed, accosted him one morning in a close arbour or alley of his garden, where he was recording his amorous

conceits, and disposed herself to understand the cause under these terms :

"I hope," saith she, "my present coming (exceeding my ordinary custom) will not move you to conceits of presumption against me ; chiefly for that I desire to communicate with you in that which yourself ought to disclose to such as are dear unto you, to the end that, if the means to restore you consist in strangers, the remedy may follow with expedition. But if a slight salve may cure a slender sore, and that your grief is of no other consequence than a passion of imaginations, why do you not take up the vein that feeds the humour of such fond conceits, and of yourself dismiss the dark clouds of your troubled fancy ? For I assure you, the shame which I have on the behalf of your doing is nothing inferior to the pangs you feel ; chiefly for that your solemn trade of life, ringing in mine ears by a general report of all men, makes me not only refuse diverse assemblies which I ought to visit, but also loathe the company of my dear companions, who forget not to reproach me with imputation of our change ; protesting unto you, that if you confirm it with any longer time, I will also assist your solitary trade, and keep myself so recluse, that, in forbearing to visit my friends abroad, I will also forbid the access of any at home. For what delight do I find in any company, when all degrees salute me with your desolate order of living ? And judge you what pleasure I take, that erst did glory with the best in the behaviour of my brother, most welcome above all men to every estate, and now to hear you loaded with titles and surnames of 'proud,' 'disdainful,' 'full of fancies,' with a thousand other impositions of like reproach. Wherefore, for end, if there remain in you any care of your own estimation or respect to content me, I beseech you eftsoons stick not with me in so small a suit as the discovery of the cause and circumstance of your annoy ; assuring you for my part, by the virtue of our parents deceased, that my life shall refuse no peril to remove your distress, and that with no less goodwill than I desire with my heart a speedy conversion of your melancholic countenance into regards of ancient joy ; imparting by that means an universal gladness to all your friends, who are driven to participate with you in sorrow, till they see a restoration of your former quiet."

Wherewith Livio, taking the advantage of the affected zeal of his sister, who gave him assurance of her promise in

that which he durst not demand, knew not at the first what reply to prefer, but that it was not against nature " for a man to flit from happy life to heavy state."

" Neither ought it," saith he, " to seem a wonder to the people, when we expose alteration of complexion. For such are equal to angels, or semblable to the brutal sort without sense, that are privileged from passion, or can keep so temperate a means in receiving and digesting the accidents of this world ; which, according the occurrence and evenements of times, do expose arguments of mirth or sorrow in the faces of them whom they possess. And, albeit, I confess unto you, that as he bears his misery best that hides it most, so such are worthy to have the name of perfect men, who, encountering their disaster with a constant magnanimity of mind, do dissimulate their grief afore the world, to the end they only may give remedy to that which is common to none but themselves. Wherein, for my part, I could never enjoy a participation of such perfection ; neither is the occasion of my extremity so easily covered, but the drooping regards in my face are ready to make declaration of my torment. Besides, I have no great cause of shame of mine evil, considering the same imports an enterprise of noble consequence ; albeit, I make some conscience to discover the principal cause. But considering the roundness of your offer, and how boldly one of us may participate with another, I am content to impart with you the circumstance of my passion. Wherein, as you have charged me with change and alteration of countenance, debility and diminution of the strongest parts in me, with a savage and haggard order of living, as you have termed it; so, in understanding the cause, I hope you will excuse me of effects of other folly than such as nature hath enjoined in generality to all men.

" And, to cut off your suspense and absolve your troubled mind of all doubt, you shall understand that the force of love (depriving mine ancient liberty) hath also transposed my former quiet and solace of mind into these mourning and pining regards which you note in me : neither can I be restored to the state which you wish, without the assurance of that which I desire, which is the goodwill of her to whom love hath given so large power over me. And as every medicine is measured by the greatness of the disease, and the light hurt is easily healed without trying the exquisite skill of the physician ;

so my grief, being grounded upon great consequence, doth not only assail me with all sorts of passions and pangs of sorrow; but also denieth to brook the operation of other remedy but such as is distilled from the herb that first infected me. It is not the offer of small harms that makes me so hurtful to myself and hateful to my friends, nor the subject of trifling annoy that stirs up these sighs and solitary disposition in me; it is alas! for beauty herself that I suffer. Aye! the very pattern and goddess of all perfection hath made me so forgetful of myself, that I seem a stranger to my dear friends. Neither have I other power of myself than such as is imparted unto me by her whose picture I carry so lively in my mind."

Cornelia, altogether ignorant in the force of affection, and by reason of the greenness of her years void of experience in turning over the volumes of love, could not but smile for the first at the jargon, or discourse, of her brother. Albeit, noting his perplexity, she let fall also certain tears on the behalf of his desolate state. And seeing him wholly converted into contemplation of a vision, judged it an effect of pity to give aid to his distress. Whereupon, she desired eftsoons in merry sort to know the goddess of his devotions, "to the end," saith she, "that I may yield her honour for your sake; and, seeing you dare not present her your request, I may enter into the office of an intercessor, and pray for your delivery. Neither need you doubt to disclose her to me, nor despair of my diligence and ready endeavour to do you good; unless you be so far spent with jealous passion that you fear I will ravish her from you, or prevent the desire of your pleasure in being in love with her myself, you abuse the loyalty of my meaning, and I do wrong to exact so far upon your secret imagination."

"I am content," saith he, "you jest and take pleasure in the evil which I suffer, so that you will perform the effect of your promise: which you may the rather accomplish by the credit you have with her who is the only cause of my torment." Whereof, after she had given him a second assurance by oath and protestation of faith, he told her (not without a fresh supply of sorrow) that it was Camilla to whom his liberty was captive; and in the balance of whose compassion weighed indifferently the licence of longer life or sentence definitive of present death; desiring her,

for end, to make her privy to the pain he endured ; and withal to procure speedy moderation of his grief, or else to award the writ of fatal summons to him that is not able to feed the vein of life without the food of her special favour. The girl, delighting still in the amorous discourse of her brother, willed him to take heart at grace, and, making exchange of his solitary order, to awake out of his dream of dumps, and revoke his disposition of ancient cheerfulness ; lest his mistress, loathing his thin and wearish looks, be afraid to grant love to a stone, or suffer herself to be embraced by one in whom is neither present delight nor likelihood of future pleasure.

"Ah! sister," saith he, "how your liberty of tongue argueth your small experience in cases of love, whose delights consist in tears, sighs, and dolorous complaints. Wherein, as such as be most constant of all make declaration also of effect of such loyalty, in taking pleasure to record their sorrow with tunes of lamentable note ; so, in exposing the contrary, we discover at unawares the slender affection we bear to the thing we desire. And for my part, I feel no less pleasure by imagination, when I see with the eyes of my mind the beauty and other perfections of my dear Camilla, than you which never tasted of the apprehension of this free constraint which the destiny of love hath appointed to attend upon me."

"I am glad," saith she, "to be warned in this sort to eschew the like evil in myself, and sorry to note the experience of so great an inconvenience in you ; but, seeing you are so surely rampired in your folly, that the offer of persuasion is hateful unto you, I am content you feed upon such ease as you find, and take pleasure in the simple contemplation of the image of your saint. For, for my part, I had rather have an hour of rest, disposing myself to sleep as soon as my head and the pillow be met, than lie with mine arms across, regarding the course of the stars, and build castles in the air, or be troubled in dreaming of the dissolution of the world, and then to baptise such impediments and enemies of rest by the name of 'the pleasures of loyal lovers,' with addition that it is a peculiar glory given them from above by the invisible goddess. It is a poor repast, God knoweth, for an empty stomach to feed only of wishes, and satisfy his thirst with drinking of an empty cup, or restore heat to the

benumbed parts by a cold chimney, or satisfy the desiring mind with simple contemplations."

Wherewith she retired, with intent to try the next day whether Camilla had any vein that stretched to satisfy the desire of her brother; whom she left with more argument of consolation than afore, by reason of the hope he reposed in her diligence.

Here was a double offence in Livio, both to force his sister to an enterprise indecent for her honour and age, and also to prefer her to be the *dariolette* of his love; opening, as it were, the way of voluptuous pleasure to all youth, the which is too much inclined that way by the corruption of our own nature, without that we need the assistance of art to supply our default in so unhonest an exercise. Albeit our blindness is so great in things of such folly, that (in respecting only the present) we never fear the fall of future inconvenience, till, being served with the writ of present penance, we find too little leisure to repent so great offences. And albeit (according to Aristotle) it is necessary to be privy to the imperfections in the world, and to know sometime wherein we offend, yet gives he this counsel withal, that we convert the experience of such sinister encounters to a peculiar defence of ourselves against the assaults of semblable accidents; and not to use it as an authority or privilege to justify our wickedness, or consume our time in the imitation of evil. Wherein, as the good men are defended by their virtue, so let the worser sort beware by so many millions of examples as our unhappy age at this present is able to furnish in the like affairs. And so to our history.

The morrow after this discourse between the dolorous Livio and his sister, it chanced that the daughter of Renaldo came all alone to see her companion Cornelia; who, albeit was sufficiently mindful of her promise, yet was she furthered with a fit occasion by Camilla. For that, after certain little devices between them, she asked the cause of the sudden change and alteration in her brother, and why he was no more seen to assist the honest assemblies in masque or other sort. To whom Cornelia answered, that as she was of equal desire to know the occasion of his solitary absence, so, grieving above the rest with his pining estate, "I have asked," saith she, "the cause of his grief; which, with the

circumstance and effect of all his annoy, proceeds from you, my dear friend and companion, as one in whom is nourished the care and travail of mind of my sorrowful brother."

"How is it possible," saith the simple Camilla, "that I should work him any woe; seeing hitherunto I have been no less careful of his well-doing than curious of mine own health; neither have I said or done the thing, I am sure, wherein was any point of evil meaning towards him, unless he make construction of my simple and honest zeal: like as also I would be sorry to be the author of his miscontentment anyway?"

"The present passion of my brother," saith Cornelia, "is derived of a contrary cause: for the too much delight and pleasure he hath taken in seeing you hath brought him to the brink of this bane; and yet, as they write of the scorpion, he hopeth to draw the remedy from her that hath given him the wound."

"If you make not a more plain exposition of your dark text," saith Camilla, "I shall hardly read the mystery of your riddle, for as yet I understand nothing but High Dutch."

"Aye, marry!" saith the other, "and therein consisteth the chiefest cause of my grief; for if the peculiar affection of my brother were common also to you, or that you enjoyed but a simple participation of his annoy, you should not only understand that which I am driven to unfold, but be as ready to give the remedy, as he hath reason in the meanwhile to suffer the grief, or I ashamed to be the messenger."

"Do away this philosophy, my dear friend," saith Camilla, "and cut off at last my doubtful suspense touching your meaning; for if the uttermost of that which is in me may stand him in stead, I will either perform the full of your demand, or at least yield you such reason to the contrary, that you shall be void of just cause to complain of mine answer."

Here Cornelia told her that the original of her brother's evil proceeded of a wonderful vehemency of love he bare to her; with addition that if she yielded him not the hire of his zeal with a counterchange of affection, she should see in short time the end of his life, no less desperately than in secret sorrow he consumeth the best of his age in the loyal servitude he hath already vowed on her behalf. "And, for my part," saith she (not without some tears), "as the

violence of his passion, only known unto me, hath forced me to stand here the unseemly solicitor of his cause; so, if it be a virtue to expose compassion upon the afflicted, let the respect of my distress stir up an increase of pity in you to aid the desolation of my careful brother. Behold, my Camilla, the circumstance of my present extremity; and imagine that with the loss of my brother decayeth the only prop and pillar of my life. And yet, simple girl that I am, void of experience in such affairs, lo! here I am constrained to build requests no less inconvenient to my estate than unseemly for my years. Albeit for my purgation towards you, I hope the law of nature, and love of the sister towards her brother, will excuse this diligence and endeavour which I use to preserve the life of him whom I hold no less dear than the tenderest part of mine eye."

Wherewith Camilla not without arguments of some little feminine anger staid her further discourse with this answer: "Who would have thought," saith she, "that a gentlewoman of your quality and calling would have exceeded the limits of her estimation, so far as, for the respect of the foolish appetite of a young man, to discharge the part of a shameless messenger, in a case no less unworthy for your honour than contrary to me to whom the embassage is addressed? Art thou so credulous in the constancy of men, mine own Cornelia, that thou wilt repose good earnest in that wherein they take pleasure to dissemble? Or art thou of opinion that as often as the jollity of frail youth do prefer sighs and trances, with other dolorous regards painted by dissimulated policy in the forefront of their faces, that it is true love that possesseth them, or honest desire that moveth their dole? Nothing less; for tears for the most part are the true messengers of the dolour of the heart, and ought chiefly to move compassion, yet in cases of love they be but suborned signs and declarations of wanton desire, and for that cause ought not to receive other meed than their meaning doth merit; seeing withal that the desirous mind grounds his pretence most commonly upon the thing which virtue cannot brook, and reason denieth to grant. And admit it be a folly peculiar to many, and a passion imparted to all men by nature, to follow the instinct of love, what grudge of conscience, I pray you, is it to a maid to suffer her vain lover to pine upon credit, so that

she stand so surely upon the guard of her chastity, that she be not seduced with his flattering charms? It is not in our power to let them to love: only we ought to be careful of our honour, and shun the infection, lest we become unhappy afore the time. Besides, how greatly should we abuse our duty and obedience towards our parents, in passing a grant of our good-will without their consent, which only ought to direct us in any sort whatsoever.

"No! no! let them lament, and measure their mourning at what interest they think good, the same shall not stay the course of my sleep, neither shall their tears eclipse the least moment of my pleasure and contentment; for, when all is said, we ought to conster the meaning of these feigned sorrows to none other end but as privy baits to entangle the simple and delicate youth of us women. For when we impart compassion to their doleful alarums, and make them the masters of their desires, God knoweth the reward we find and how soon they laugh at our fragility; and taking pleasure to see us in passion, do leave us poor wretches to the hire of our folly. So if Livio have imagined a bargain of love, let him make much of his own conceit, and embrace the shadow of his fancy; for, for my part, it shall suffice me to be armed with resistance, and that I am void of desire to encounter him or any other in that sort. Wherewith, contenting myself with the honest amity between you and me, my dear Cornelia, I conjure you by the virtue of the same to give over the pursuit of this quest, seeing that, besides the loss of time and slender profit you are like to reap of your travail, you shall also lose a companion of me, with small commendation to yourself in courting the guests that haunt your house with requests of such unseemly effect."

Which last resolution stuck greatly on the stomach of Cornelia, for that the disdainful repulse of her companion argued a despair hereafter to ease the distresses of her brother. But chiefly she grieved in that Camilla seemed to enter into sinister conceits against her: which, with an honest shame of that which was already passed her mouth and fear any more to offend that way, together with her ignorance in the ordinary replies of such as have taken degrees in the school of love, made her prefer her excuse in simple sort, with promise hereafter to disclaim the enterprise. And blaming wholly the importunity of her brother, desired,

notwithstanding, her Camilla not to discontinue her custom of repair to her lodging. Whereunto she condescended, and retired to the palace of her father, leaving Cornelia in disputation with herself what answer to forge to her desolate brother. Who, as soon as he understood of the retire of his mistress, addressed him to his sister; whom because he saw in the attire of sorrow—I mean, her eyes bathed in the tears of her late repulse—he gave judgment immediately upon the case, with firm persuasion that Camilla did not only deny his request, but also misliked with the messenger in performing her promise.

The force of which conceits drave him into a passion of alterations and change of colour, not without some argument of mortal peril to his person, afore he demanded to hear the answer; which being not unmarked of the girl, she prevented the offer of further danger, with a contrary of that which Camilla told her; and for fear of further inconvenience by his sudden trance, declared unto him that, albeit his mistress was not so quick of consent as his extremity required, yet her heart was not so hard frozen but there were means to thaw it; neither was her answer without hope, although at the first she seemed to object the disloyalty and ordinary fiction of men: willing him, for the rest, to abandon despair, and arming himself with courage, to dismiss his solitary and savage order of life. Wherein, for a more increase of uncertain consolation, she told him that, albeit it was as yet but the fore-moon, and that he had no reason to advance himself so far as to crave mutual conference, yet he need not forbear to write to her, and that, with the consent of time and place, she would deliver the letter, with endeavour to bring her last resolution. Wherewith, albeit she seemed only to feed the time, with intent to make him discontinue his fancies, attempting notwithstanding a wonderful impossibility; for that he was so stalled in his amorous gulf, that all the pilots belonging to the infinite galleys of Venice lacked force to hale him out; yet seemed she thereby to breathe an air of fresh comfort into all the parts of her languishing brother, who, liking her advice, determined to put her counsel in execution.

Whereupon, as one of superficial skill in writing the Italian verse, he composed a certain elegy, containing the sum of his sorrow and substance of his request. Whereof,

because I have not the true copy, I leave it to the judgment of them that have read it; but this much I presume of his sorrow, that he did not end his epistle without an infinity of tears, imparting the watery dew of the same on diverse parts of the paper, to the end the same might argue to his lady the dolour of his passion that governed him during the time of that contemplation. Which approved sufficiently his folly, with declaration how well they be biggined that be coifed with a night cap of such stuff as wrapped the empty head of our Livio; who failed not the next day to deliver his tragical letter to his sister, with great charge of expedition in presenting it to his mistress.

Cornelia here was double passioned, both to see her brother persevere in his folly, without intermission of torment, and also that she was forced to perform a second embassage to her whose company and friendship she was sure to abandon for ever, if she added new terms to her former request. But if she had been as well seen in the subtleties of love, as she seemed most simple in experience in that art, she would have considered, that what angry clouds soever appear in the face of women, yet take they a singular pleasure to be courted, and are not so angry indeed as their countenance doth argue, when their servants do visit them with letters of humility.

And deferring in this sort certain days the delivery of the letter; fearing that which happened—that if Camilla refused to perform the effect, the danger of her brother could be no less than either present death by despair, or at the least to enter in some mortal sickness; yet being pressed with his continual importunities, the poor girl determined to try the ford, and sound eftsoons the heart of Camilla, who (as it chanced) came the same afternoon to see Cornelia. Where, after they had made an experience of their skill in a banquet of curious confections, Cornelia not unmindful of the disease of her brother, and seeing the offer of opportunity for that the place was void of impediment of company saving the two girls, drew the letter out of her pocket, and with a smiling regard, intermeddled with honest shame, gave it to Camilla, desiring her to read it and judge what be the follies of lovers.

Camilla, imagining by and by from what part the embassage was sent, told her in sort of pleasant anger,

that as she was not ignorant in the meaning of that mystery, and that if it were not more for the respect of the bringer than desire to content him that sent it, and that she was passed the fear of any charm contained in the same, she would commit it to a thousand morsels in her presence; so, if the reading brought cause of miscontentment, she gave her assurance to perform the uttermost of her former promise.

Cornelia alleged ignorance in the matter. "Only," saith she, "I can thus far assure you that I have not in charge to present you with letter or message from any man; for, as I found it this morning upon the stairs going out of my chamber, so I hope you will neither enjoin me blame nor penance for the fault wherein mine innocence is sufficient to clear me."

"Well! well!" saith Camilla, "I will not stick to give you the reading of these amorous lines, arguing as small pleasure to him as that writ them as evil received of me to whom they are addressed." Wherewith she opened the packet, and read the roll from the one end to the other. Wherein, albeit she discovered in her face a singular pleasure, beginning even now to feel the motions of love within her tender breast, and taste of the appetite of a desire which she durst not satisfy, yet, using her accustomed wisdom in concealing that she desired most, she covered the suspicion of affection with certain terms of reproach, which she bestowed upon her simple companion in this sort:

"I find now," saith she, "that my patience and facility in hearing your reports do yield you too much favour in furthering your fond practice; which you need not go about to colour with other enamel than the complexion of your own nature, seeing that she with whom you have to do, can spy a fly in the milk, and give judgment of the intent of these baits, with the effect of your meaning; desiring you (for preventing a further inconvenience in your brother) to seek to cure his disease as you may, lest, in continuing his folly, he further a subversion of that which is the best part in him. For he hath already of me as much as he may hope for with assurance. And for your part, as you seem to repose neither religion nor virtue in promises—for that the last time we were in terms of these follies, you gave me assurance to discontinue the enterprise—so that it is I that am ready to give punishment to mine own indiscretion,

and endure the penance of mine own rashness, in depriving me of the company wherein I took most pleasure and contentment, bidding you farewell till better occasions may restore our familiar visitations."

Wherewith she put no difference between doing and saying, fearing that if she had attended the reply of Cornelia, she had been in danger to yield to the bargain, in opening her ears too wide to the persuasions of her companion; whom she left no less astonied than herself tranced and full of diverse imaginations, beginning even then to measure the affection of Livio, and give judgment of his loyalty by the continuation and vehemency of his passion, with absolute resolution (for all her dissimulated disdain) to change purpose and admit the offer of his friendship, if she were eftsoons required by him or any in his behalf; blaming her rashness in reproaching his sister, and cruelty more than convenient to her brother, who began even now to take possession of her thoughts, and make himself a secret mediator in his own cause.

Wherein, surely, may be noted inexperience of the fragility and inconstant disposition of man, and specially in the affairs of love; seeing that she which erst detested everyway to be partaker of such impression, is now changed in a moment and brought to lay her head under the yoke of servile affection, making, as it were, a simple and plain table of her heart, to the end to draw thereupon a form of thoughts and imaginations in diverse colours, according to the direction of him that thus hath got the government of her liberty with authority to dispose of her as he thinks good. And yet I cannot but allow her long delay, and judge her of great wisdom to suspend her consent till she had well considered of the matter, seeing the daily inconveniences happening to such as, neither careful of their honour nor curious of their quiet, do admit indiscreetly the bargain at the first offer, without knowing the merit of the persons, or examining the circumstances of the future sequel of their love. Whereof are derived so many examples of a number of miserable men ending their lives by unhappy despair, whose wretchedness ought to warn us to deliberate at large afore we put in execution, and to use a reasonable mean in our doing: I mean, not to run headlong into the gulf of affection, lest our danger be equal to the peril of the

unfortunate Acarestrians ; who, because they were disfavoured of their ladies, entered into such conceits of mortal grief, that, when they would willingly have retired and been delivered, it was either impossible or at least very hard to give them remedy.

To which crew of desperate lovers we may well add the disaster of this Livio ; who, assured of the answer of his lady, as well by his sister, as also by the regards of disdain he noted in her farewell when she departed (whereof he was partaker by shrouding himself in a secret corner of the chamber during the parley of the two maids), fell immediately into so strange a sickness, that, abandoning at the first the desire of sleep with the appetite of the stomach, he left the physicians at the end of their wits : who, being void of skill to cure his disease, told his friends that if he would not receive comfort of himself, his life was in hazard, for that his evil proceeded only of passions and inward sorrow of the heart. Wherein they had reason, seeing that the disease of love is contrary to the disposition of all other griefs. For as there is no distress, what extremity soever it import, but it may be either cured or qualified by certain drugs and confections devised by art to comfort the stomach and restore the heart to a gladness ; so the patient, plunged in the passions of the mind, can neither brook the assistance of physic nor operation of herbs ; only the presence or simple word of his mistress hath more power over his evil, than all the mystical or artificial powders devised by the most expert physicians that ever came out of the university of Paris or Padua.

Whereof the experience appears in this Livio ; who, languishing every day from evil to worse, consumed by piecemeal with the force of his amorous fire (no less than the snow, lying upon the side of a mountain, yields and wastes with the heat of the sun) ; which also forced such inward grief to his sorrowful sister, together with despair of any means to restore him (for that Camilla discontinued her repair to visit her), that she yielded tribute to his passion with a disease of equal mortality, imparting such alarums of dolour through all the parts of her body, that she was constrained to keep her bed in a little cabinet joining to the lodging of Livio ; who, by the thinness of the wall which only divided their chambers, was partaker of the least word

that was spoken in the lodging of his sister, whose grievous groans, forced by the violence of a burning fever, gave such increase to the danger of Livio, that he was at point to yield to the last alarum of life, if the sickness of his sister had not brought the speedy remedy of his disease.

For Camilla, astonied without measure that she neither met Cornelia at the church, saw her at the gate, nor window, nor any assembly whatsoever, learned so much by inquisition that she was advertised of the mortal danger of Livio, together with the extremity of his sister, who (if they were not rescued by great marvel) were at point to be shrined together at one instant in their fatal tomb. Here Camilla began to recant her ancient cruelty. For, in ceasing any longer to dissimulate her secret affection to her Livio, and the sorrow she suffered for the affliction of his sister, she seemed to purify the wrong she had done to them both through a river of affected tears, distilling by such abundance from her watery eyes that she seemed at the point to visit the purgatory of the other world, to do penance for the two evils whereof she confessed herself to be the only occasion. Wherein, after she had spent certain hours in public complaint, whose dolour seemed of force to move the heavens to tears and stay the course of the sun, feeling still an increase of passion by the vehemency of love, she was constrained to abandon the place and perform the rest of her exclamation against her cruelty all alone in her chamber, with these terms :

" What fury or force infernal is this, which, shaking the fortress and most constant part in me, hath made me in one moment yield to that wherein I have been hitherto invincible ? Is it possible alas ! that that which I judged a dissembled passion in this unfortunate gentleman should turn to a true effect of undoubted faith, confirmed by the power of that which we call love in the hearts of men ? Why have not I considered that the horse which is of noble courage will be governed by the shadow of a rod, where the dull beast is scarcely stirred with the pricking of the spurs ? The fearful dog doth also bark more than bite, and deepest rivers do run with least noise. So nature hath imparted a peculiar instinct to the noble mind, not only to be more delicate in diet, and ardent in affection, but also to embrace the object of their fancy with a more vehemency

of desire and passion than the rest of the rude and gross sort, who are not worthy to be partakers of the mysteries in true love. Ah, Livio! Livio! how do I feel a motion of that which I cannot term otherways than a free force without constraint, and a dolour without cause or complaint! For I am possessed with an evil, wherein I take pleasure, and feel an experience of a pain, without the which I think the life of man can hardly be sustained. And yet my mind wavereth in such dreadful conceits, that I fear to make declaration of that which both law of love and duty of my conscience binds me to expose for the solace and relief of thy present affliction: but, alas! the renown of mine honest name is so dear unto me, that I wish rather to embrace the extreme pangs of death, than give one simple occasion of discredit to mine ancient virtue. For that as man's wisdom is able to supply the losses of all other things; so it is not only unfurnished of means to restore the forfeit of our honesty, but also void of art to cover the fault of so great an offence.

"But is it a just imputation or worthy fault, when in our business we respect virtue, and conclude the end of our enterprise with an honest meaning? Is it not a deed of compassion to give succour to him that stands in water up to the throat, and at the point to perish for want of help? What can we do less than be careful to recover him who offereth his life in the sacrifice of affection for our sakes? Who can justly term our doings by the title of offence, when we yield a mutual amity to him that pursueth our goodwill with a respect and intent of lawful marriage? No! No! Cornelia, thou shalt not lose thy brother, nor I the company of so dear a friend, for lack to answer in reciprocal will to him, who with the peril of his life conceals the argument of his sorrow. Ah! most constant and loyal Livio, seeing the reputation of mine honour denieth me access and conference with thee, and the shame doth close my mouth from discovering the secret of my good meaning towards thee, take courage, and discharge thou the office of a bold solicitor to her that is no less ready to grant than thou meritorious to have, and, despoiled already of all haggard cruelty, is not only prest to reknowledge the honour which thou offerest me, but also wholly framed to the postey and appetite of thy will."

"And now do I feel that against the force and power of love the strongest resistance is too weak, neither is the whole world of sufficient strength to put to utterance the soldiers whom he preferreth in the field. Whereof, who is a more late experience than myself; who erst defying his malice, and now to attend upon the chariot of his triumph, and yield me prisoner to him, who, being hitherunto my bondman, hath now made me the slave of his importunate requests? And seeing the sentence is already past, and confirmed by the voice of my destinies, why do I conceal my passion in the midst of a thousand flames which torment me within, or why do I dissemble that I desire most, or retire mine eyes from the view wherein they chiefly delight? Why do my feet stay to transport this body to the place where the heart hath already taken possession?"

Wherewith she determined the speedy consolation of Livio, with no other drug or confection than a free consent of her love, if the same were eftsoons demanded. And thereupon she coloured her going to his lodging to see Cornelia; whom, as she found in her bed, with more arguments of death than appearance of life, by reason of a general weakness which had mortified the whole strength of her body; so she had not spent many words in the consolation of her companion, but Livio, smelling as it were the presence of his lady, asked his sister who was with her; who answered, that only Camilla kept her company. Wherewith, forcing a supply of courage in his faint heart, with intent to know the final arrest of his life or death, he began to plead with his absent mistress in this sort:

"If there be any hope in extremity, or expectation of help in mortal distress, it is time now, good madam, to convert your ancient cruelty into an humour of compassion; both to defend yourself from the imputation of a tyrant, and my life from a wretched end of miserable despair. Cease henceforth to dissimulate the uttermost of your rigour, or drop of present grace, seeing that both the one and the other hath indifferent power to relieve my distress, either by death in denying me your favour, or continuance of longer life by imparting you special grace. Come! cruel mistress, and see thy unfortunate Livio, without heart, hope, or argument of longer breath; if, by a promise of thy good-will, thou breathe not an air of fresh consolation, and, by

the summons of thy word, revoke my dying mind from this tomb of miserable despair ; wherein I feel myself so tormented with the officers of death, that, nature ceasing to supply my weary parts with force, I find an impossibility in my tongue to obey any longer the desires of my heart."

Wherewith his breath began to draw short, staying the course of further speech, if not that in entering into his fatal trance he exposed certain doleful groans, which caused both the young ladies to run in haste to the succour of the patient ; whom they found striving with the extremity of his last pang, albeit not without some little perie of breath, which he seemed to reserve with great difficulty. Whereupon, Camilla, seeing a proof of his constancy even to the last moment, and having but one means to relieve his trance, made no conscience to let fall her rosy and coral lips upon the mortified mouth of her dying Livio ; who received such present consolation by this offer of favour unlooked for, that the force of nature and vital strength, ready to depart out of every vein of his body, retired to their ancient places. Wherewith, he, using the benefit of his fortune, forgat not to embrace his lady with an infinity of kisses, whereof she restored him a double interest. Albeit, because he should make no great profit of this sudden courtesy, and to prevent withal a suspicion of light behaviour in herself, she used her accustomed wisdom, entering into familiar conference in this sort :

" I hope, Seigneur Livio, you will not convert this compassion which I have used in the repeal of your mortal farewell in any sinister opinion of the diminution of the integrity of Camilla ; who, as long as she liveth, will so stand upon the guard of her honour and honest renown, that no degree shall have just cause to reprehend the least favour she extends to any man. In which conceit I am also content to impart a credit to your loyalty, persuading the same to be without fiction : whereof I am no less glad than I hope the love which you bear me is chaste and of honest intent, respecting an end of sincerity. For if I saw any likelihood to the contrary, and that a disordinate will did guide your desire and were the cause of your passion, assure yourself I would make less conscience to commit me to the mercy of the most horrible torments in the world, aye ! and peril of present death, than to leave any part of that which makes

me march without blushing amongst the best of our country. In which respect, with full persuasion of a sincere simplicity in your love, I cannot but return you a semblable favour, with absolute assurance from this instant of such firm affection and zeal as any lady ought to impart to him who seeks her friendship in sort of honest and lawful marriage. Neither shall it decay after the effect of desire be performed, nor diminish by any sinister accident, until the fatal sequestration of our soul and body.

"Whereof let us use wisdom in the convey of such affairs as may be taken both in good and evil part, to the end that the majesty of the Highest being not offended, our honour fall not into the slander of the world. Wherein, for a first charge to be committed to your diligence, and withal to prefer an assured effect of the vehemency of your affection towards me, dispose yourself to demand me of my father; whose consent you shall find me to confirm in such sort as yourself shall devise. Arm yourself then with comfort and retire to health, at the request of her who, taking no pleasure in solitary regards, wisheth you to reserve this precious flower of your youth for other exercises than to waste with passions of desperation, no less enemies to the strength of the body than hurtful to the health of the soul. And seeing, besides, that in the recovery of you consists the health of your sister, suspend no longer the consolation of her, and contentment of yourself and me; who, in attending your expedition to procure the good-will of my father, will dispose myself in the meanwhile to be thankful unto you anyway wherein mine honour and honesty will justify my doing."

Which last words seemed of such operation in the tranced mind of Livio, that, discharged, as it were, of a perilous vision in a dream, he lifted up his eyes and hands towards heaven, yielding honour to the gods for his happy encounter, and, kissing the white and delicate hand of his new mistress, he forgat not to give her such humble thanks as the greatness of his felicity required; which seeming to him to exceed the compass and power of fortune, he judged it rather the virtue of a divine miracle than an effect mortal, for that in so sudden a moment he was acquitted of so peremptory a danger; assuring her that, as soon as health and strength of body would assist the desire of his mind, he

would perform her commandment in demanding her father's consent. Wherein he hoped to delay no long time, for that he felt a wonderful approach of health by the view of her presence in his late and last storm of affliction.

"I would do no less," saith she, "than yield you succour in so great an extremity, both to deliver myself out of pain in seeing you passioned, and also to qualify the grief of my dear companion your sister; to whom you are also bound in some sort to be thankful for my coming hither. For albeit my conscience summoned me to a compassion of your torment, with desire to yield you the due hire and consideration of the honest love you bear me, yet the regard of mine honour, denying me to visit you, seemed an impediment to the effect of that whereunto I was bound by so many dutiful merits. Praying you, for end, to excuse that which is past, and pardon me for the present, in that I cannot assist you with longer company; persuading thyself, my dear Livio, that although my body must supply another place to colour the traffic of our love and prevent suspicion, yet thou hast made such a stealth of my heart that the same will not fail to keep thee company in my absence."

Wherewith taking her leave, with a chaste kiss of her servant, and friendly farewell to Cornelia, she retireth to her father's palace, leaving her lover well lightened of all his cares, saving of a necessary means to sound the good-will of the old Renaldo. Wherein, notwithstanding, he used such expedition of diligence, that, afore himself could enjoy the benefit of perfect health, he procured certain ancient gentlemen, his near parents, to perform his request to the old man; whom they solicited with such instance and in sort of marriage, that he admitted their offer, and confirmed the bargain with these words, that only Livio should be the first that should renounce the veil. "Albeit," saith he, "because of the infirmity of mine age, I use the consent of my son in all my affairs of importance, so I crave only your patience in the final conclusion of the marriage till his return from Rome; at which time only yourselves shall name the day of consummation."

In this answer, albeit, appeared an impediment to the performance of the marriage (for that, as you have heard, Claudio envied the state of Livio, which argued a difficulty in him to approve the alliance), yet Camilla, understanding the

resolution of both their parents, gave as sure judgment of the marriage, as if it had been already published in the church, and thereupon began to enlarge her familiar haunt and repair to Livio. Whom if she embraced afore with earnest zeal, it was nothing in respect of the vehemency of her present affection ; which also divided itself into such a sympathy and equality of love in them both, that it spread abroad by indifferent branches in both their hearts ; like as the morning sun in the east giveth by little and little continual increase to his beams, comforting the creatures upon earth.

And in this often interview together, Livio, enjoying now his ancient health and dexterity of body, being one day (amongst the rest) with his lady in the chamber of his sister, took his lute, and sang a ditty which he had made of their reciprocal passion, with such contentment to his Camilla, that she desired him eftsoons to repeat it in semblable note, as well for the delight of the tune, which he performed with a voice to her contentation, as also the subtle style and fine convey of the matter, arguing a conclusion of that which they both wished with equal appetite ; seeing that, as their continual haunt and frequentation together gave increase to their desire, so they were both of opinion that love could not bear the title of perfect affection, if the effect of that which was indifferently wished of them both, did not make perfect the thing which hitherunto was debated but by words. Otherways, that which was passed between them, being but a naked love, without effect other than certain delicate kisses——which served rather to kindle the coals of desire than quench the flame already burning within their entrails—seemed but a simple plate or plain table, which the cunning painter hath smoothed for the nonce to draw some image of exquisite skill. Wherein being overcharged with intoleration of desire, and finding the abode of Claudio longer than they imagined, they passed unhappily a privy contract between themselves ; with expectation to consummate the full of the matter, with a due hire of the pains they endured indifferently in attending an effect of their pleasure, at the return of Claudio from Rome.

But here Fortune began to present herself upon the stage, as one that will be known to bear a sway in the good hap or infelicity of man ; and is of such inconstant and malicious regard towards us, that, when we think we be past the fear of all peril and trodden all disasters under our feet, it is then

that we find least assurance in the things wherein we reposed our chiefest pleasure. And in the turning of her wheel is figured the alteration of our worldly affairs ; I mean, by a conversion of things which erst seemed pleasant and delicate, into a taste exceeding the bitterness of gall ; in such sort, that oftentimes we find death of more easy burden than we are able to bear the pangs which ordinarily attend the flatteries of this uncertain Fortune : whom the poets and painters (not without cause) have drawn in the picture of a blind woman, standing upon a tickle stay of an inconstant globe or bowl, representing thereby her fragility, and how blindly she guides the things of the world. What authorities could I infer to exclaim against her mobility, if it were not for the shortness of time, and that I will not cloy your memory with so tedious a discourse. How many have we seen at the point to enjoy a monarchy, kingdom, or seigniory, who, when they least thought of commutation or change, have lost their honour, expulsed their estates, and at last ended their lives by a miserable death.

Who have read the sixth book of Valerius Maximus may justify my opinion by the example of Quintus Scipio, a valiant captain and consul in Rome, who, long time having Fortune at commandment, was seen in a moment, cut in morsels, serving as unworthy food to the ravenous beasts issuing out of the savage deserts. Radagaisus, sometime king of the Goths, for all the assurance he reposed in his invincible army (as he thought), was not exempted from the doom of inconstant and mortal destiny ; for that, his people slain, his captains fled, and he taken prisoner, passed under the sentence of an infamous death by Stilicho, general of the army at that time for the Emperor Honorius. With other infinite proofs of antiquity, wherewith it is no need to fill my paper, seeing the domestical accidents and like chances happening amongst our neighbours at home do give sufficient testimony and faith of that which we go about to prove.

And now being upon the discourse of Livio and his unfortunate Camilla, who, albeit were neither princes nor governors of kingdoms, yet being in the paradise of their pleasure and at the point to perform the last act of their delights, encountered in one moment a change and sinister subversion, all contrary to the appointment which they had resolved upon their future marriage. And sure it is an

argument of the greatest folly that can be, to promise ourselves an assurance of things which depend upon the will and disposition of another, upon which the issue is also most uncertain: for that, differing from us in counsel and imagination, they are also without care in what sort we take their judgment, seeing they depend no way upon us nor our fancy. Like as it happened to these two unfortunate lovers.

For Claudio now returned, and not liking anyway the alliance between Livio and his sister, wrought so much with his father (who saw not but by the eyes of his son, nor attempted anything whereinto Claudio added not the conclusion), that Renaldo renounced the words of his former consent, pacifying the parents of Livio by the best persuasions he could imagine, with thanks to the young man equal to the greatness of the honour which he offered in seeking to be his son-in-law. This news was no sooner imparted to our two lovers, but it is to be thought they escaped not without sundry alarums of mortal grief; which had dismissed their passions with the end of their lives, if it had not been for the offer of a simple hope whereupon they grounded a new consolation: for that they expected at length a remorse in the old man (by reason of his promise) to justify the contract already passed between them two.

Whereof Camilla, as pinched with a grudge of more wrong than the other, for that she saw the unjust malice of her brother was the only stay of the effect of her determination, entered into a passion of such fretting conceits, tempered with a mortal hate to Claudio, an indissoluble zeal to her servant, and a just despite against the delibity of her father, that she was at the point to use force against herself, and advance the effect of their malice by her untimely death. Wherein, because she would not discover openly that which was not yet doubted of any, she retired to a moderation in her grief, till, the first part of the evening being spent, the desire of sleep summoned every man to withdraw himself to his lodging, when she, in her chamber, with the only company of her woman, began to burst out into new terms of complaint, cursing the hour of her birth, accusing the weakness and want of courage in her father, but chiefly inveighed against the unhappy arrival of her brother in this sort:

"What injustice or cruelty is this of the heavens, to give us a heart to choose and liberty to love one of equal desire

and semblable will, and then to bar us the privilege of that freedom in not making a perfection of that which nature hath set abroach in us by the communion and conjunction of our thoughts ? Is it reason the body be more respected than the mind, in that the heart and inward parts, making a choice of affection, should not have authority to summon the body as their subject to obey the instincts and suggestions of the spirit ? Nature sure doth abuse her reputation in this case, to coif her creatures with the attire of love, making a mutual consent in both parties, and then to deny the consummation of the thing herself did first begin in us. From whence comes the iniquity of that law which alloweth a father for his pleasure only, and without justice, to force an inclination on his children to that which is neither necessary nor convenient for them ? Is it not sufficient alas ! that we yield them honour, with the tribute of our duty and service : that we give succour to their old years, and attempt nothing without their consent ; but that we must be subject to a further tyranny in performing the sentence of their thraldom, although it differ wholly from our will and choice ? And if marriage be a free conjunction, dependent upon an unity or conformity of both parties, how can I refuse that whereof is passed already a confirmation, or admit other husband than he to whom I am bound by vow of consent ? Ah ! this is one of the fruits of tyrannous love, to work the effect of a consent between us, without leaving us a means to bring the same to perfection, or suffer us to consider whether the parties knit together by unity of affection in spirit might also be assisted with a conjunction of the bodies without offence to God or the world. But what ? Why do I enter into terms of justice with him, who is no way partaker of reason ; and who is so sudden and uncertain in his enterprises, that he neither takes advice afore he strike, nor useth leisure to deliberate or foresee the success of anything he beginneth ? For, as he is naked and without eyes, so is he void of judgment, and inconstant in all his doings, assailing commonly the hearts of such as he finds idle and least occupied with virtue.

" Ah ! spiteful disdain of kindred, and unnatural malice of a brother ! In what sort have I deserved this hard penance at thy hand, to deprive me of the thing wherein I took most pleasure ? Wherein hath the courteous Livio offended thee ; if not that his honesty exceeds thy rude disposition, and

virtue giveth cause of shame to thy wicked will? Or, peradventure, thou disdainest his just merit; for that he is better favoured in all companies than thyself? And is it reason that thy consent confirm my affection? Why should my advancement depend upon thy good-will; or the choice of my husband ask counsel of thy consent? Shall I be subject to him who hath no authority over me but by an encroachment of years, for that he is the eldest son of my father? Hath he any privilege that way to govern my will, or give laws to my fancy? Nothing less; for my father hath already past the accord between Livio and me. But you will say, peradventure 'under a condition.' A simple article, I confess; which also is of no force, if the party be void of pretence or prejudice. And wherein shall it be prejudicial or profitable to him, if Livio be my husband? Seeing it belongeth to my father to depart with my dowry and portion of marriage, and my husband to dispose it without interruption, so long as he is a member of life.

"What weakness is this in a father to be governed wholly by the breath of his son (whose unjust malice, rather than argument of reason, makes him renounce the word of his honour) in a case touching the quiet and consolation of her who ought to be no less dear unto him than her tyrannous brother; who, when he hath exposed the uttermost effect of his spite, and that I am to be bestowed in another place by his appointment, it shall appear whether his commandment be as current over me then as his malice rageth without measure or reason at this present; protesting by the height of the heavens that none other than he to whom I have pawned my faith, shall enjoy the chaste acquaintance of the unfortunate Camilla? No! Livio is mine, what wrong soever they do to our virtuous love, which so long as I live shall be indissoluble in me; being ready, withal, to refuse nothing that may advance the consummation of the marriage between me and him, without whom I feel an impossibility to live."

Wherewith her passion grew to such a vehemency, that her last words ended with the course of longer breath; in such sort that she slided suddenly from the seat where she sat, and fell grovelling upon the ground, resigning with a dolorous shriek the use of vital air. Albeit, the expedition of diligence in her woman procured with much ado a return

of life; and with such consolation and offer of hope as she could prefer, she won her to go to bed; where, albeit the view of the wrong and discourtesy of her brother seemed for a time to stay the course of sleep, yet in the often repetition of her sorrows appeared a little of quiet, which closed her eyes, and cast her into a slumber, wherein she seemed to behold standing before her the image of her Livio, half dead, embracing her with a pale and hideous regard; which forced her to such a fear, that she brake suddenly out of her dreadful sleep, spending the rest of the weary night in pitiful complaints. Wherein certainly she had reason; for that in that dream, or rather mystical vision, was figured the disaster which not long after overwhelmed them both.

Neither ought we to find it strange if the apprehensions appearing in our sleep do give us warning of the good or evil happening unto us; for that we have certain records which justify the same in the person of one, Brutus, he which was vanquished in the fields of Pharsalus (whether he were awake or in the depth of his sleep), seemed to see in his tent a terrible shape of a certain sprite pronouncing his overthrow. Besides, the authority of natural reason moveth us to confess that, as the impression of a great fear, or longing desire of anything, do present oftentimes afore the eyes of our mind (the body being in rest) the image of that which we love or fear; so also the spirit that is void of passion, or at point to fall into some perilous accident, encountereth commonly in his sleep the thing which he wisheth not to happen, and abhorreth to remember when his eyes have dismissed the drowsy humour of sleep. For Camilla desired nothing less than the death of her Livio; and yet, not long after the presage or forewarning of her dreadful vision, she only witnessed the effect, assisting his funeral with her presence in the tomb, as well as she was willing to admit his company in the secret bed of their unfortunate marriage.

Livio, for his part, was not void of passion on the behalf of the froward success of his business. Albeit, seeing he could no way bribe the good-will of fortune, he resolved to give place to her present malice, and in attending the benefit of a better time, to practice Claudio by circumstance and mediation of his near friends. Albeit, feeling in the meanwhile an intoleration of love, with continual increase of desire to cull the flower of his affection, and taste of the pleasant

juice of the grape which quencheth the thirst of the loyal lover, he imparted his pain and request to his lady, in a letter of this substance :

"Seeing there is no justice, good lady, to support the consent to your own disquiet, and suffer me to live in passion without comparison, methinks you do wrong to the indifferent contentment of us both. For if you desire my death, you need use no other minister for fatal execution than the alarums of dolour which I encounter daily by your means ; but if you have care of my quiet, and grieve no less with the imposition of my mortal torment, why make you such conscience to yield me consideration of the honest zeal I bear you, seeing the same doth also import a special contentment to yourself ? You know what is already passed between us, neither are you ignorant of the small respect your parents use towards you. Wherewith, if the mutual consent conclude the marriage, you ought also to understand that neither the tyranny of the one, nor want of courage in the other, hath power to withhold you from that which you are bound to perform, nor hinder me to enjoy the benefit of my desert. Wherein I appeal to the torch of your conscience, with request to consider in what sort you will advise me, to the end that, by the assistance of your counsel, I may the better carry over the greatness of my extremity ; which, as it is divided into speedy relief or present despair, so, seeing I am of force to pass by the one, I doubt of which of the two to make my most profit. For, albeit the first hath power to perform the full of my felicity, yet, in attending the effect, I consume in a flame of burning desire. And the other, if it import a present abridgment of my torment by untimely death, yet in the very act consists a spot of dishonour to myself, and an everlasting surname of cruelty to her in whose balance weigheth the indifferent sentence of the life or death of the most desolate and loyal

LIVIO."

Camilla—who desired nothing less than to delay the desire of her servant, for that herself laboured of the same disease—returned the messenger with no other answer than that at after dinner she would visit Cornelia ; when, also, she would satisfy his master by mouth, for that she feared the

subtlety of her brother would intercept her letters. Wherewith the unfortunate Livio, not knowing the thread of mischief which Fortune was now spinning for him, entered into such solace that the chamber wherein he walked seemed too little to contain his present gladness; the rather for that he imagined that his mistress would now dismiss all excuses and impediments to the effect of his long desire, seeing there wanted nothing to consummate the marriage, but solemn publication. In which passion of joy, he supplied the time in attending the coming of his lady with singing and soft music; according to the nature of the swan, who, the nearer she draweth to the end of her destiny, the pleasanter note she sings, bathing and pruning herself in the purest stream she can find, to the end to do honour to her funeral fate. And as he imagined thus to be at the point to arrive in the suburb of his paradise, behold! the approach of the goddess of his devotion and dear mistress Camilla, with her *chambrière*, who as she was already privy to the whole practice, so she used her company now to avoid suspicion, imparting the same to Livio, to the end he need not distrust her presence, if by chance they entered into parley touching any secret match where needed not the assistance of many witnesses.

And being thus in arms together, God knoweth if any sort of kisses or other follies in love were forgotten! Wherein, as it is a common experience that neither bit nor bridle is able to govern the fury of love when we be at point to enjoy the pleasures we desire, so there appeared such an indifferent vehemency of appetite between them, that at the instant they made plot or beginning of that which the same evening gave end to the pleasure and life of them both.

Whereof Camilla, as more hot in desire, or less able to bear the burden of her burning affection, prevented the request of Livio, and made plain the first entry and path to both their mishaps, saying that, "for as much as our consents have concluded a marriage, and that in the breach of our promise appeareth a peremptory prejudice to our consciences, that we seal the articles of the contract with a full consummation of the secret ceremonies in marriage; both to take away all occasion of offence, and also to mortify the malice of my brother, maugre his heart. Wherein," saith she, "being fully persuaded of your consent to my proposition, and for that in cases of love delays and long consultation be hurtful, and stir

up causes of displeasure to the hearts of such as be striken with the same disease—whereof the contrary, the rest of our human affairs require a maturity of counsel, to the end the success may answer the expectation of the parties—so I wish you to attend the benefit of time this evening: I mean, at the hour of supper, when men are given least to suspicion, you fail not to come in as secret manner as you can to the garden gate, where my woman shall be ready to convey you into my chamber, to the end we may there take advice of that which we have to do."

Whereunto Livio was not curious in consent, and less unmindful to yield her the choice of a thousand thanks for offering the privilege which he doubted to demand; giving her assurance to use such exact wisdom in the convey of so secret a mystery, that Argus himself, if he were upon earth, should not descry his coming, and much less any be privy to the dance but such as performed the round. Wherein he was not deceived; for as he was the first, so she failed him not at the close, and both their miseries of equal quality in the end. Like as it happeneth oftentimes that those amorous bargains redound to the harm of such as be the parties; who, albeit, do allege a certain respect of honesty in their doings by pretence of marriage, yet God, being the judge of their offence, will not suffer the wrong to the obedience of their parents in concluding privy contracts unpunished, and that with such a penance as the remembrance is notorious in all ages.

But now to our Livio, who, neither unmindful of the hour, and less forgetful to keep appointment, attireth himself for the purpose in a night-gown girt to him, with a pair of shoes of felt, lest the noise of his feet should discover his going; and, for a more honour of his mistress, he forgat not his perfumed shirt, spidered with curious branches according to the fancy of his lady, with his wrought coif powdered with diverse drugs of delicate smell. Wherewith, he stealeth in as secret manner as he can to the gate of appointment, where he found the guide of his love: whom he embraced, as well for the service he found in her, as also in that she resembled the beauty of his mistress Camilla, who, after she had taken her night's leave of her father and brother, with search that every man was in his place of rest, retireth to her chamber with such devotion as commonly they that find themselves in semblable journey to work the effect of such like desire;

where, encountering her unfortunate servant, it was concluded to employ no time in vain reverence or idle ceremonies, but in a moment they entered their fatal bed together; where, after certain amorous threats and other follies in love (serving as a preamble to the part they meant to play), Livio entered into the unhappy pageant of his fatal and last pleasure. Wherein he chafed himself so in his harness, and was so greedy to cull the first flower of the virginity of his Camilla, that, whether the passion of joy prevailing above the force of the heart, and the inner parts, smothered with heat, could not assist the enterprise according to their office, or that he exceeded nature in surfeiting upon his pleasant banquet, he found himself so sharply assailed with shortness of breath, that his vital forces began to fail him in the midst of the combat. Like as not long since it happened to Attalus, the cruel king of the Huns, who, in the first night of his unfortunate marriage in Hungary, enforced himself to so great a courage in the pleasant encounter with his new wife, that his dead body (found in her arms the next morning) witnessed his excess and gluttonous appetite in the skirmish of love. Which also might be the bane of this Livio; who, respecting no measure in drinking of the delicate wine, no more than if it had been but one banquet dressed for him in the whole course of his life, was so overcharged with desire in that pleasant skirmish, that the conduits of life, stopping upon a sudden, barred to add further strength to his greedy appetite.

Whereupon he became without motion or feeling in the arms of Camilla; who, feeling him without sense, and that he seemed more heavy and rude upon her than afore, doubted a truth; wherein, also, she was fully satisfied by the light of the candle, which she caused her *chambrière* to bring to the bedside; where, viewing the dead body of him whom she loved no less than herself, and judging the cause as it was indeed, entered immediately into such a mortal passion of dolour, that, albeit she would have exposed some words of compassion on the behalf of the pitiful accident, yet, feeling a general diminution of force through all her parts by the inundation or waves of sudden sorrow, she found her tongue not able to supply the desire of her heart, which, with the consent of the rest, loathing the use of longer life, resigned her borrowed term to the fates; falling at the instant without sense or feeling upon the dead body of him whom she

accounted a duty to accompany in the other world, as well as she delighted in his presence during their mutual abode in this miserable valley. A happy kind of death, if we had not to consider the peril which attends such wretches as, having no means to perform the effect of their pleasure but by unlawful stealth, are so frank for the shortness of their time, that, in satisfying the glut of their greedy appetite, they make no conscience to sacrifice their own life.

But if we pass further in the view of these offences, we shall find a derogation of the honour and integrity of the mind, with a manifest prejudice and hazard to the health of the soul: which makes me of opinion, that it is the most miserable end that may happen to man; the rather for that the chiefest thing which is regarded in the pursuit of that enterprise, is to obey the summons of a beastly and unbridled lust of the flesh. Wherein I wish our frantic lovers, who (making contemplation upon causes of love) account it a virtue to end their lives in this lascivious bond of privy contract, to refrain that which is so indifferent hurtful both to the soul and body; seeing their death is not only without argument of desperation, but also their souls most sure to receive the guerdon of civil murder; which we ought to fear and eschew as near as we can, afore the sequestration of the earthly substance from the part of divinity which we participate with God. And what contentment or glory soever they repose in this monstrous abridgment of nature, reprehending them of disloyalty which do the contrary, yet their act merits none other name than the title of brutality; neither can I think but their opinion is guided by some sprite or humour of frantic folly. Like as it is not the part of a Christian (as the Apostle affirmeth) to prefer the fickle pleasures of the flesh, which are of shorter moment than the thoughts of a man, afore the fear of God, reck of our life, and care to present our souls without spot afore the Throne of mercy in the day of general account, when all thoughts shall be deciphered and no fault unpunished.

The poor girl-of-the-chamber to the dead Camilla, seeing this fatal mystery, with the distress she was in for that she was a companion of the conspiracy, thinking to give end and play the last act of the tragedy, searched about the chamber for some glaive, or sword, or other thing apt to make the minister of her bloody intent. And being deceived that way, she had no other means to play double or quit, but with

impetuousity of dolour. Wherein she raged with such doleful shrieks, that the bruit of her complaint awaked the whole house. Whereof the first that entered the chamber of funerals was the tyrant Claudio; who, albeit was the only cause of this dolorous massacre, yet, in place of confessing his fault, or yielding sorrow to the loss of such two loyal lovers, he grew in more rage by the view of the dead body of Livio. Whereof as he would willingly have committed a new murder, saving that he saw him without respiration or argument of life, so, his anger being turned into woodness, and rage into fury, he wreaked his choler upon the poor girl; to whom he gave three or four estockados with his dagger through the body, and slung immediately out of the chamber, to the great amaze and terror of his unfortunate father, who, seeing his house full of murders, and his son committed open slaughter in the person of the innocent girl, could not so govern his passion of dolour but he seemed more ready to pass that way than desirous to enjoy longer life.

Albeit, being kept from doing force against himself by certain of his servants that were there, he uttered some part of his inward grief by open exclamation against his own misfortune, inveighing chiefly against the inordinate will of his daughter, with advice to all fathers to keep a steady eye upon their slippery youth. Wherein he commended unto them the example of his own folly in favouring so much the fond appetite of his daughter that he gave leave to her liberty to exceed the view or pursuit of his eye; accusing chiefly the impediment he gave to the marriage, seeing that in the same appeared the peremptory ruin of his house, continual desolation to his old years, and in the end to leave his goods and living to strangers for want of an heir of his body. For that, having but two children, the one was already dead, and the other no less worth, by the mortal violence he had used upon the innocency of the maid; who, after that surgeons had somewhat stayed the bleeding of her wounds, confessed the contract and circumstance of the love, whereof you have heard a particular declaration.

Which rather increased the dole of the old man than gave moderation to his sorrow: which, notwithstanding, by the persuasions of his neighbours, and constraint of necessity (which as a virtue giveth patience perforce to all extremities), he dismissed in outward show, and disposed himself to the

funeral obsequies in as solemn manner as he could ; erecting a tomb of marble in Saint Francis' Church, wherein were shrined the bodies of the two lovers, as dead at one time and by one occasion, to the great regret of the whole town : wherein everyone was so indifferently passioned with sorrow, that a man should hardly have heard any other tunes than public exclamation against the cruelty of Claudio. By which general complaint, together with the depositions of the maid (who died within three days after her hurts), Dom Ramiro Catalano, governor of Cesena under Cæsar Borgia, began to enter into terms of compassion on the behalf of the two dead lovers and mortal anger against Claudio ; for that his cruelty was the cause of the death of the two only flowers and paragons in Italy. Wherein he pursued so vehemently the rigour of his office and equity of justice that Claudio lost his head secretly within the castle, for fear of mutiny or tumult of his friends.

This was the miserable end of the love and life of the two Cesenese ; whose death and discourse of amorous traffic, for that it doth not exceed the remembrance of our time, I have presented as a familiar example afore the eyes of our youth, to the end that everyone, respecting the duty of his own endeavour, may use the misery of this precedent as a pattern to prevent the like mischief in themselves. Wherein, also, as we may note that love is but a rage or humour of frantic folly, derived of ourselves, and converted to our own harm by the indiscretion that is in us, so the next remedy to withstand that fury is to encounter him under the ensign of reason, and flee the occasions which weaken the mind without travail and bring the body in the end to the theatre of execution. We are also warned here to temper the delights we possess with such measure that, forgetting the blindness of Livio, we may eschew the horror of his act, with detestation of the folly he used in the glut of his unlawful pleasure.

THIRD TALE

PANDORA OF MILAN

THE ARGUMENT

According to the opinion of the wise Demosthenes, there is no one virtue that hath made more famous the fathers of former time than the gift of civil courtesy, neither is nature more glorified in the imps of her creation than in that we dispose ourselves and doings according to the disposition of the climate which she hath appointed to govern our actions and thoughts; respecting chiefly to refrain from violation of innocent blood, which in all ages hath restored a name of great clemency to diverse, albeit, touching other effects, they were ambitious tyrants, and cruel enemies to their own commonwealth. Which unnatural cruelty, also, as it hath been, and is, of such detestation amongst the rudest companions of the world, that the very barbarians have always had in horror the wickedness of such as pursue the quest of guiltless blood, and took away the life of him that had not committed offence, so they have always had in honour the virtue of such as sought to extirpate the root of tyrannical furies born for the ruin and destruction of man; like as, among the Roman Emperors, Nero, Caligula, and Commodus; amongst the strange nations, Phalaris, Alexander, Phereus, Diomedes, and the cursed Numilisintha, Queen of Thracia, who, after she had miserably murdered an innocent mother, committed semblable cruelty upon the child within her belly. Whereof, albeit the horror was great, yet was it nothing in respect of the hellish act of a lady of our time, happening not in the Anthropophagans, Scythia, or amongst Cannibals or Amazons, ancient murderers of their children, but in the heart and midst of Europe, and in one of the most fair and rich provinces of the world; where aforetime hath been kept an Academy or general school to instruct all nations for the honest and virtuous direction of their lives, but of late was found there a gentlewoman, degenerating from the instinct of her sex, which exposed effects of more cruelty than erst hath

been noted by any writers of any age : whereof the discourse followeth at large.

Having then to treat upon tragical affairs, proceeding of unnatural lust, with lascivious disposition, the only master pock and chief fountain from whence distilleth all poisoned humours of infection, overflowing at length the channel of his quiet course with unruly waves of inordinate cruelty, I mean here to present unto you the true pattern of a second Medea, in the person of a young lady, born and wantonly bred up in the rich and populous city of Milan. Whom, because mine author seems to christen by a contrary title, to avoid all occasions of mislikes which other ladies (bearing the like name) might unjustly fall into by the lavish mouths of the malicious sort, I think it good also to pass under terms of like silence her parents and husband, to the end that their virtue (meriting a better meed than to bear the blame of the detestable life of their wicked daughter) come not also in question amongst such *diabolos* as have their tongues always tipped with the metal of malicious slander.

This Pandora then (borrowing her name of the quality of her unchaste and cruel conversation) gave manifest signs, during the time of her infancy, of her future disposition, arguing the poisoned climate, which, first getting dominion over the young years of her green understanding, directed after the whole sequel of her life by the dial of a cursed constellation, making the latter remainder of her years subject to a thousand ills and peremptory inconveniences. For she was disdainful without respect, spiteful without measure, hung altogether full of the feathers of foolish pride, so wholly given to wallow in dilicarie that she detested all exercises of virtue, and so drowned in the filthy desire of the flesh that, afore she had attained to the full of fourteen years, she became such a bankrupt of her honour that a poor page, the son of a simple artificer, nourished in the house of her father for charity's sake only, crept so far into her credit, that, with small suit, he gained the use of the isle which ought to be invincible in unhonest sort. Wherein, notwithstanding, after he had once rampired himself, finding the soil no less fertile than to be tilled with easy travail, he found, also, no less familiarity in the owner ; who feasted him so frankly with the pleasant juice and precious commodity of her island, not erst inhabited

by strangers, that his common exercise was to keep her company every night alone in her chamber, lest the *lutins* and dangerous bugbears, appearing by visions in the night, should put her in fear, or keep her from sleep. This was one chief delight wherein she took pleasure in the prime time of her age, an undoubted calender, sure, of the noble acts to be expected in this imp as her years grew to greater number, and her desire of more maturity. Which wicked exercise is sufficient of itself to untie the tongues of backbiters, stirring up the malice of certain *polylogos*, ready always upon one simple occasion, or for the fault of one, to reprehend the honour of all dames, if the virtue of you chaste ladies were not only able to confute all their suborned reasons of reproach, but also, by the clear integrity of your conversation, to charm the mouth of the slanderer from inveighing sinister means against any of the noble sex feminine, so much commendable and to be honoured of all men.

This young pupil and prentice of Venus, although she listened with small training to the lure of Cupid, yet used she, notwithstanding, such care in the convey of her follies that the best eyes in her father's house were too blind to behold the amorous traffic which passed between the page and her; neither was she doubted (wheresoever she came) to be referred to the first place in the beadroll of pure virgins; although (as you have heard) she had paid the first fruits of her virginity to one no less unworthy of the offering than to enjoy the possession of so dear a jewel, being already vowed to another by them that by most right ought to dispose of it. And who may see here as in a glass their great negligence and little care in the education of their children, preferring rather to pamper them in pleasure, with too large a scope in liberty (the chiefest means to seduce younglings not yet confirmed in ripeness of discretion) than to restrain the appetite of their foolish will; which doth not only make their bodies subject to all sensual prostitution, but also subverts the honour of their whole house whereof they took their beginning.

This Italian imp and honest Pandora, weary even now of the company of her page—who, belike, was not able to quench the lust of his unsatiable mistress—began, with familiar glances of her eye and other secret regards of good-will, to practise a second league of society, concluding a new bargain of love with a young gentleman, lusty and likely everyway to

perform the expectation of her desire ; who, also, for his first endeavour, found the means to corrupt her governess with certain pieces of gold, arms, sure, sufficient enough of themselves to batter the walls of the strongest and best defended fortress that this day is under the pole of heaven ; which, also, was the key (as the poets feign) that opened Jupiter the door of the brazen tower wherein the fair Danae, daughter of Acrisius, was curiously enclosed.

This second lover, thinking to cull the first flower of the maidenhead of Pandora (being yet scarce sixteen years of age), began to doubt of the case when he found the way already beaten, and the entry so easy without resistance. Albeit, contenting himself with his present fortune, being driven notwithstanding to drink the lees of the vessel which the page had gaged to his hand, and sucked out the sugared juice of that grape, he failed not to court her with a continual haunt of his company, in such sort that his chief exercise and time was employed in the supply of her greedy desire ; until at last, being cloyed for want of change of diet, or weary with so long hunting one kind of chase, or, peradventure, not able any longer to maintain the skirmish for want of fresh supplies, he began to suborn divers means to purchase his departure. Wherein, with the assistance of a few feigned importunities, he prevailed only with this excuse, that, being captain of certain bands of footmen, it behoved him (he said) for great respects to visit his charge with expedition.

Wherewith, with small suit, he gat leave and went his way, resigning the fort which he had so long battered to the guard of an old and rich gentleman dwelling in the same city ; who, doting more upon the beauty of Pandora than noting diligently her disposition, married her, after long intercession to her friends : a match far unmeet considering the inequality of their years. For he, bearing the burden of fifty winters upon his back, his former moisture and strength converted into watery humours of weakness, scarce able to sustain nature, who at those years also summons all men to decline, seemed far unable to encounter in single combat with her, that had not yet seen the uttermost day of eighteen years. Albeit being married, although his lot was to take other men's leavings, yet he misliked not his choice. But being mounted upon a common hackney, he thought himself well horsed, and as one not very scrupulous, or little skilled

in such kind of house-keeping, he took her for a pure virgin : a thing not much to be marvelled at, seeing the daily accidents in the like affairs, and specially the subtle charms and sundry legerdemains, whereof such *Dermopteræ* or leatherwinged housewives as Pandora have no small store, to cover their faults, and make them seem maidenlike (although they have already played the didapper), that the clearest eyes had need of spectacles, and the wisest wits want sleight, to discern their cunning.

And now this new married dame, getting first the upper hand of her old husband, made her second endeavour to have the whole convey of all the household doings, whereby her commandment was only current, and she, holding the rein of her liberty in her own hand, might haunt and use what place of recreation she list at her pleasure. Neither forgat she so to bridle goodman hornsby (her husband) with obedience, that, without his controlment, or suspicion, Monsieur le Page (who gave the first penny of her honesty) had free access unto her chamber, where he paid his own arrearages, and also helped to supply the cold courage of the old knight ; who, as he rather increased her appetite than satisfied her desire, so his good-will, peradventure, was more than his power able to perform.

And as the page had thus eftsoons placed himself in the possession of his former prey, it chanced that a young gentleman, banished from Rome for certain forged conspiracies incensed against him, fled to Milan ; where, lodging right over the palace of Pandora, beheld easily the amorous glees of his neighbour, who took singular pleasure to be requited with the like regards ; and, seeing her fair, young, and disposed to all recreations of pleasure, began to proffer her love, first by the pitiful regard of his countenance, painted full of arguments of dole, and after by certain secret sighs declaring, after the Italian manner, the ardent flame of affection, not ceasing continually to burn his heart in the desire of her beauty. And omitting no means which might move her to take compassion of his pain, he forgat not to pass divers times afore her lodging, with a lute or other music of soft melody ; whereunto, also, he accorded his filed voice with notes of pleasant tune, and that with such a grace of great delight, that the sweet noise of his harmony seemed a thousand times of more enticing melody than the heavenly jonking of the

nightingale. Wherewith, in short time, he kindled a fire in the heart of this young wanton, toward whom he need not have used such circumstance or long ceremony, seeing that of herself (if his suit had not intercepted her) she had prevented his meaning in taking upon her the office of the client, being only given to range and ravin for the satisfying of her inordinate lust, desirous to change her acquainted soil for the fresh herbage of green pasture.

Wherewith, one evening (her husband being from home) this Roman lover, called Candidio Jocundo, made his walk in solemn manner under her chamber window, playing of his lute with a voice of such masked music, mingled with outward shows of dolour in his face, and powdered finely with sundry sighs of pitiful disposition, that it seemed of such strange operation to the heart of Pandora, being already thoroughly daunted with the desire of him that sought but to deceive her, that, being now no longer able to keep her ears shut from the voice of the crafty charmer, she desired him to enter. Whereunto (as the subtle fowler, piping all the day in the bottom of the hedge till he hath allured to his bush the bird he chiefly desireth) he agreed, I am sure, with more contentment of the offer than difficulty to be entreated. And, being arrived in the haven of his desire, God knoweth with what devotion they offered to the goddess of pleasure, celebrating the banquet with all dishes of delicacy. Wherewith the impudent Pandora forgat not to feast him so frankly with shameful encounters on her part, that, with little suit and less entreaty, he entered commons in the place which the old John thought to be reserved to himself, and with small cunning gave her checkmate that stood slenderly upon her guard, loathing even now her incontinency that so easily yielded her honesty in prey to whosoever would pursue it. Wherein, certainly, he had good reason.

For of all the degrees of unhappy creatures, that without the consent of womanly shame do wickedly transgress the sacred law of chastity, they ought chiefly to use some respect of honesty, that are admitted into the inviolable order of matrimony; and if their destiny be incident to so evil a fortune as to enter into society with a secret friend besides their husband (a thing notwithstanding forbidden by the Word of God, and less tolerable by the positive laws of the world), yet ought they (I say) be so confirmed in their unlawful

affection toward their second pewmate, that their amity may seem of perpetuity and without change ; neither ought they be so careless in the choice of their extraordinary consort as their own doings afterwards may make them worthily to be laughed at. Which, indeed, is the just reward for such as seem so light of their seal that they shoot off without either match, flint, or powder ; and of whose foolish and unshameful lightness proceeds the argument of so many comedies and interludes played in open stage—not so much to the confusion of themselves and parents, as open scandal to their husbands and houses for ever.

Whereof the familiar example is to be noted in the sequel of this Pandora, who was not only in short time utterly detested of that Roman, but also a common jesting-stock, and pointed at, by his means, of all men, for her rash familiarity used towards him ; who, not long after the first foundation of this friendship, was called home from exile by Leo de' Medici their sovereign Vicar of the See of Rome, pardoning his offence, and restoring the use of his former liberty. At whose departure (unlooked for) Pandora entered into no small passion of dolour, not for any fervent affection or love which she bore to her Roman friend, but because his sudden going away left her void of all liquors to quench the burning flame of the greedy gut of her unnatural concupiscence ; and chiefly because Monsieur le Page began, also, to wax cold in the combat which he had wont to maintain with such courage.

But Fortune here was so friendly to the fulfilling of her licentious appetite, that she (stirring up a fresh supply of her desire) presented in the lists a young knight of Milan called Cæsar Parthenope ; who, by chance, hiring the lodging of the late Roman succeeded him also in desire and diligence. For he, at the first view, regarding the flattering beauty of this Alcina his neighbour, suffered himself unadvisedly to slip into the snares of love, honouring that in his heart with true sincerity as a dear jewel which his predecessor worthily hated with due detestation. And entering here into the pageant of love, his first was to give some outward argument of his inward affection, wherein he began to make many pale-walks afore her gate, roving with his eyes at her chamber-window (according to the amorous order of the vain Spaniard), uttering, by the doleful view of his troubled countenance, the great and secret desire quarrelling inwardly with his unruly thoughts.

But what? Need a man use policy where slender suit will prevail? Or who will bend his battery to that fortress, whereof the captain demands parley and sues for composition? And besides, when the veil of shame is once removed from our eyes, what let is there to stay the sensual course of our beastly appetites? And they that suffer the rein of reason to slack, or wholly slip out of their hands, seem as transformed in a moment, and so weakened touching the lively motions and forces of the spirit, that the exterior provocations and appetite of desire prevails wholly above the inward resistance and action of the soul. Like as this glutton and impudent Pandora, who, seeing her sometimes saluted with a pleasant eye of her new neighbour, forgot not to requite him with such wanton glances, and of such open understanding, that the knight, doubting not of the success of his enterprise, assured himself already of the victory.

Wherein he was somewhat holpen by the hand of fortune; who, providing a journey for the husband of Pandora, touching the execution of a commission in a foreign country, kept him absent in those affairs the space of a year or more. Wherein Parthenope forgot not to use the opportunity of so convenient a time; and being ignorant withal of the great liberty of his mistress—who drew him on all this while by fine trains, to the end to make him more eager of bit—had no way to unfold the cause of his passion but by a letter, which he made the messenger of his grief, and solicitor of his desire in this sort:

"The curious artificer and cunning work-woman Dame Nature, I see well, good madam, was not so careful to work you in her seemly frame of all perfections, as the power divine and disposers of the dangerous and lofty planets (assisting her endeavour with certain peculiar ornaments of their special grace) were ready to open their golden vessel of precious treasure, pouring by great abundance their heavenly gifts upon you, striving, as it seems, which of them for the increase of his glory should dispose himself most liberally on your behalf. Like as (according to the poets) they contended of old for the adorning by several ornaments the late Pandora, whom, for all respects, they agreed to be the odd image of the world, but specially for beauty; which if it dazzled the eyes of the gods, shining as a twinkling star in the elements above, yours I think was reserved as a torch of glistering flame to give

light to the creatures of the middle world. Whereof, for my part, viewing with too ardent affection the sundry celestial ornaments imparted to you by the gods, with the piercing beams of rare beauty given you for your dowry of Nature, I doubt whether mine eyes (dimmed altogether with admiration) will first cry out for the loss of their former sight, or my whole body (plunged in the passion of affection) will accuse the heart with the rest of the inward senses for consenting so easily to cause of their disquiet ; wherein my life weigheth indifferently in the balance of a thousand annoys, and mine ancient liberty in the meanwhile kept close in an extreme captivity. Albeit, measuring your heavenly shape with the outward show of singular courtesy that seems to occupy all your parts, I cannot resolve of any cruelty to consist in you ; neither can I judge (by the argument of your beauty) but that my captivity shall be speedily converted into a happy delivery ; like as, also, my hope half assureth me, triumphing with honour over the doubtful object of my thought, to taste at your hands the pleasant fruits of the thing I chiefly desire; which is (in accepting me as your servant and secret friend) to admit me into such place of pity, as the due merit of my unfeigned service deserves by justice. Wherein your act shall seem no less meritorious afore the throne of the high goddess, than honourable with general fame for ever in the world, for relieving him, who without your assistance (being wholly transformed to the appetite of your will) finds the burden of life of such uneasy toleration, that the least repulse of his suit at your hands imports his fatal summons, to resign the term of his borrowed years in this world. Neither doth he desire to have the fruition of his earthly days any longer, than employ the same with all humility in the service of you ; whom his heart hath already pronounced the sovereign lady of his life, whereof you only may dispose at your pleasure.—Your unfeigned

CÆSAR PARTHENOPE."

Which letter he delivered unto his page, experienced already in the convey of like affairs, who (according to the sharp passion of his master) used the expedition of time in the dispatch of his charge, whereupon depended the recovery of his sovereign. But she, being already (as you have heard) enamoured of the knight, who was the first that wooed her with arguments, felt even now, by the discourse of this letter,

such increase of affection, pinching so extremely with the desire to see him, that, without all order of womanly discretion, she embraced the page in the behalf of his master, giving him this answer, to require his master not to doubt to come to her house. "Whereof," saith she, "I also desire him, to the end I may be resolved by the breath of his own mouth of that which I yet doubt touching the report of the letter." Wherein she preferred vehement importunities, showing the boy which way he should bring him to her chamber, "where," saith she, "I will attend his coming this evening."

Wherewith the page returned, discoursing point by point the success of his embassage to the dolorous knight; who, revived by the gladsome news of his boy, but chiefly by the short appointment resolved upon by his mistress, cast off at the instant the apparel of dole, disposing himself everyway to perform the expectation of the charge, committed unto him by the mouth of her whose commandment he would not transgress, though his life should incur the hazard of a thousand perils. And putting himself in as seemly order as he thought good, he went (only with his page) in solemn manner to visit the saint; who was of herself more ready to grant freely than the pilgrim to demand the petition, and who, attending his coming with more desire to ease the passion of the patient, in quenching the fervent rage of her insatiable appetite, than he for his part had cause to yield adoration to so detestable a shrine, was withdrawn all alone into her chamber, where he found her coifed for the nonce only in a nightgown, and attire for the night ready to go to bed. Which, with the natural show of her lively beauty, set out to the most advantage by the shining light of the wax candles, drove the knight at the first into such astonishment, that the use of his speech was converted into silence, and his eyes only occupied in beholding the rare beauty of her who was utterly unworthy to wear so precious a jewel of nature. Albeit, expulsing at last the fever of his dumb trance, with kissing her white and delicate hands as his first entry into a further matter, proposed the cause of his coming in this sort:

"I may by good reason account myself more in the favour of fortune than any gentleman that ever was incident to any good hap, seeing, good madam, that besides the assistance of the place, I am also preferred to a convenient means to unfold unto you at large the smothered grief preserved hitherunto

(to my great pain) in the uttermost part of my entrails: which long since had sought a vent to burst out in open flame, if the dew of the hope of that favour which now I find in you, had not served as a necessary liquor of comfort to delay the raging heat of the furnace. For otherwise, good madam, I assure you, the small experience I have to digest the bitter pills of love, had offered my life an untimely sacrifice to death. And now, seeing by the intercession of fortune, and great courtesy of your good ladyship, I am not only sprinkled with the water of new consolation, but also arrived before the oracle to whom I have so long desired to present the earnest penny of my humble service, I beseech you (saith he, not without tears and sighs of pitiful disposition) open the windows of your pity, and let fall the sweet showers of compassion upon this torment, dealing so extremely with me without ceasing; which, because you shall not think to be of less passion than the words of my mouth seem troubled in uttering the secret sorrow of my heart, lo! here I am become, in your presence, the pitiful solicitor of mine own cause."

Wherewith Pandora, who hitherto had loved but only to satisfy her inordinate lust, and seeing withal the importunities of her client, all to be sprinkled with the tears of his eyes, requited him with like arguments of kindness; and feeling now within her heart certain motions assailing the secret of her thoughts with unfeigned affection towards her loyal Parthenope, could not any longer dissimulate that which she chiefly desired, but embracing him with sundry signs of assured familiarity, said unto him, more for manners' sake than otherwise:

"I marvel, sir, that, being armed with so small experience, you can so clerkly discourse of the effects of love, whose mysteries are not so plainly to be revealed by any, as by those that have taken degree in his school. And well could I impute that to your rashness, which by your letters you have termed a cruelty in me; for your suit hath not been of such continuance as it may crave sentence in post, nor your travail so painful as the reward ought to follow with such hot expedition. Albeit, as you feel your own hurt (not escaping peradventure without some pangs of affection), so you must think the martyrdom is not peculiar to one, but dividing itself into a like sympathy of passion, hath weighed us both in the indifferent balance of affection. For if love hath built

his bower in the bottom of your heart, I must confess unto you, sir, that I draw under the yoke of his awe, neither is my torment anything inferior to yours. Whereof I had long ere this given you understanding by plain practice, if the veil of shame (a common enemy to the amorous enterprises of us women) had not covered mine eyes, and closed my mouth with fear, that I durst never (whilst my husband was at home) cast forth such baits of the great good-will I have borne you, since you were our neighbour, whereby you might perceive with what loyalty I have chosen and adopted you the only owner of my heart, and with whom I wish to pass the remainder of my life, with such pleasure and contentment as is necessary for the solace of two true lovers."

Which last words (for the more assurance of the bargain) she forgot not to seal with sundry sorts of kisses and other homely tricks of familiarity, whereby the knight, being absolutely resolved of that which erst he doubted, began to take possession of her mouth, adoring her eyes with looks of loving admiration, and, passing in order to her white neck of the colour of the fresh lily, came at last to behold her bare breasts, seeming like two little hills or mountains environing a rosy valley of most pleasant prospect, which he forgat not humbly to honour with the often print of his mouth. And passing some space in these amorous traffics with a thousand other sleights of folly, whereof our vain lovers have no lack when they seem to dispute of pleasure with contentment of desire, they entered the lists of their single combat, in a fair field-bed, ready dressed for the purpose; where Parthenope, encountering his pleasant enemy with no less force and courage of his part than she had grounded experience to withstand his malice in such exploits, entered the breach which so many had made assaultable to his hand. And being in possession of the common place of Pandora, she found him so valiant in the affairs of her desire, that in respect of the lofty courage of this new champion, she accounted all the rest but children that erst had traded with her in the like traffic.

Wherefore, from the instant, she gave him such assured place in her friendship, that hanging wholly upon the shoulders of Parthenope, she had no quiet in her mind but when her eyes were occupied in beholding his presence. Neither was he, for his part, void of like affection; for, being enchanted

with the charms of this venomous basilisk, he employed his time to court her continually with his company, defying all felicities in the world, but that which he seemed to receive by the fellowship of Pandora; to whom alone he yielded all devotion with great humility. But this pleasure, being of slippery continuance, stole away with the shortness of time, their great amity converted into indignation and spiteful revenge. Yea! their mutual society, sealed with all assurance of affection in their hearts, was by and by so separated and utterly dissolved, that it was never able to return to its former unity.

For soon after the league of this new friendship, behold the page, somewhat refreshed by the absence of two or three months from his mistress, repairs to his old exercise; wherein he found no worse entertainment at the bountiful hand of Pandora, than when he first tilled the soil of so fertile an isle. Neither would she for all this lose the company of her new champion Parthenope, but, using the order of level coil, she feasted them both indifferently on the dishes of one kind of banquet, and reserved to herself a change of diet at her pleasure. But the Milanese, noting her disloyalty, entered into divers disposition of choler, sometime determined, for the revenge of the wrong which he seemed to receive, to kill his corrival, and manifest by open publication the inordinate lubricity of his lady. Which he had performed accordingly, if natural courtesy, with the regard of the honour which he held, had not prevailed above his just cause of indignation in that behalf.

Wherein, albeit he dismissed the revenge, yet could he not escape the extreme passion of jealousy; which so pricked him at the quick, taking away his desire of rest, and, in place of the appetite of sleep, filled his head full of hollow dreams and vain visions, being in short time so transformed with fantasy, that there rose question of his sudden alteration amongst divers of his familiar friends; whereof one, called Eucio Marciano, no less dear unto him by approved friendship than by the law of faithful alliance and ancient descent, who was not ignorant in the malady of his kinsman, disposed himself to cure the disease and mortify the cause with one medicine. And being wholly privy to the practice of the insatiable palliard Pandora, by the report of our late Roman Jocundo, accosted this knight one day as he walked all alone

in a gallery of his lodging, reprehending his rashness in this sort :

" If I had as many means to cure your disease, good cousin, as I am thoroughly persuaded of the cause of your sickness, I would convert the grief I feel in your behalf into speedy endeavour to relieve your distress. Alas ! what unhappy trade of late have you entered into, that so removes your senses out of their siege of reason, transforming the lively colour of your face into a complexion of paleness, your mind continually occupied in solitary thoughts, and wholly changed into a disposition contrary to your ancient order ? Do you think that I am either ignorant of your passion or of the league of love concluded of late between the unchaste Pandora and you ? Ah ! good cousin, I lament not so much your present disaster, as I fear the fall of future inconveniences like to thunder upon you, if God prevent not the ills which threaten you by taking you out of the hands of that tyrannous she-wolf ; whose poison is of more perilous infection than that which distilled from the breath of the first Pandora, whom the two Greek poets do affirm to brew the first vessel of venomous liquor that ever came into the world. Alas ! if reason would suffer you as well to discern the doings and detestable life of this open hypocrite, even from the years of her infancy, as your folly is content to lead you to listen to her cursed lore, you would not only seem satisfied with the pleasure which hitherunto you have received, but also abhor the greedy appetite of hers, so given to hunt after continual change. Neither dismay you at all, if the pleasure which you count peculiar to yourself, be imparted to another, far unmeet to match with you in that or any other condition. For he whom you suspect to supply the place of your absence, was the first that tilled the craggy ground of your insatiable mistress, gathering the first fruits of her virginity. Which, notwithstanding, might be dispensed withal by reasonable toleration, if the number of them besides were not infinite, that have already battered the fort whereof you think yourself lieutenant and only possessor." (Rehearsing here in order the beadroll of those that she had admitted for her unlawful bedfellows.) Whereof, Parthenope, bowing a willing ear to the tale of his kinsman, was driven into no small marvel at the pretty discourse of the noble acts of this valiant soldier of Venus.

But Marciano, although he saw arguments of remorse in the heart of his cousin, yet he thought his disease was not utterly cured unless the cause were also taken away ; whereof, pursuing his intent with vehement persuasions, he requested him at last to leave those traffics of love, and specially in case of adultery. " For," saith he, " they do not only diminish the honour, age, renown, and wealth of him that followeth them, but also they are hurtful to the health of the soul, forbidden specially by the mouth of God. And for your part, methinks, it were better to marry some honest gentlewoman of your own calibre, sustaining the honour of your house with passing the rest of your years in mutual society with your lawful wife, than, in consuming the best time of your age, to depend wholly upon the pleasure of a shameless and common doxy ; who, when she hath sucked out the green juice of your youth, will not stick, I warrant you, to procure the end of your days with some miserable and untimely death. You are not ignorant, besides, I am sure, of the authorities of divers histories, noting the great number of strange inconveniences, but specially perpetual infamy, which followeth as a due reward to their travail who, not regarding the dread commandment of God and health of their soul, do defile the marriage bed of their neighbour. Wherein for my part the office of the friendship nourished of long time between us, together with the respect of indissoluble consanguinity, moves me, not only to expose my advice so liberally towards you, but also to present unto you this last request with semblable importunity—that, as well for the commodity of yourself as consolation of those who wish your advancement, you will abandon the haunt of this barren and woman void of all virtue ; whose wicked disposition argues many ways too late a repentance for you, if in short time you dispatch not your hand of her acquaintance."

Wherewith, discharging the true part of a dear friend, he so conjured his kinsman, that, comparing his report with the argument of lightness he had already noted in his mistress, he detested already the remembrance of her beastly conversation ; and, because he would disclaim her acquaintance, company, and affection which erst he bare her, at one instant he removed his lodging to the further part of the city, where within short time he married a young gentlewoman, daughter of one Eusebio Jovial, no less virtuous, honest, chaste and

courteous, than the other proud, cruel, spiteful and lascivious ; leaving, notwithstanding, his cast concubine, Pandora, big-bellied of his doing ; who, noting not only his long absence from her, with the change of his lodging, but also that he was suddenly married, and she unaware of his intent, wrapt the choleric humours which assailed her for the present in a letter ; wherein she was no niggard to spit frankly the poison of her stomach, in uttering at large the conceits of her mind against the disloyalty of her perjured lover, as it pleased to term him. And being signed and sealed, she delivered it to a messenger convenient for the convey of such embassage, with charge to perform the dispatch with expedition ; which, accordingly, was accomplished. For her maid, Finea, who erst had been colcarrier in the amorous affairs of Pandora, finding the knight in the company of his kinsman Marciano, delivered him the letter of her mistress, importing this or the like effect :

" The only experience of thy traitorous practice, O perjured Parthenope, is not only sufficient of itself to stir up the just exclamations of all women against the infidelity in men, but also hath sown such seeds of perpetual slander in their attempts of love hereafter, that thy disloyalty towards me (registered for ever in the remembrance of our sex) will hinder the enterprises of others, whose intents (tending peradventure to a more sincerity of affection) deserve not to be repulsed by the merit of thy detestable falsehood. And truly, for my part, I could never have thought that faith, purified through the rivers of so many tears, confirmed by the witness of a thousand sighs, and lastly (for a more assurance) sealed with so many oaths, had had so small harbour in the hearts of men nowadays, if the proof of thy unhonest dealing had not argued it unto me with such familiar example in myself that, alas ! I curse (by good right) the constellation that first consented to my nativity and unhappy procreation, in suffering me to be governed by so hard a destiny, or deceived by the most untrue and faithless sycophant that ever offered service to any poor gentlewoman. Albeit, if I had not been so liberal to prostitute mine honour for satisfying thy unchaste desire, my conscience had been easily dispensed withal for the penance of so great a fault, my heart free from present passion, and I apt enough to forget thee, whose strong

charms of extreme love have so enchanted my senses and made me subject to thy remembrance, that the small time of thy absence is no less grievous unto me, than thy present abuse gives me just cause to cry out openly of thine inordinate cruelty. Alas! is this the guerdon of the unfeigned love I bare thee? Is thy disposition so unnatural, to return the precious merit of mine honour with so unthankful a meed of undeserved discourtesy? Have I loved thee so entirely, preferring thee most dear above all men in the entrails of my heart, to be deprived of thy company when I expect to reap the fruits of pleasure with everlasting continuance of our society? Must I now abandon the fruition of thy presence, being wholly resolved in thy affection, and when I crave thy succour by great necessity? Thou are ignorant alas! in the case of my extremity, neither wast thou ordained to bear part of the pinching pangs which I feel in my womb, proceeding of the cursed seeds sown by thee in the bottom of my belly, stirring even now in the parts of my tender sides with such torment, that only I poor wretch do bear the penance of the fault due to us both. If the view of thy former pleasure, wherewith thou hast been erst so frankly feasted at the bountiful hands of thy Pandora, cannot move thee to compassion of her present grief, spare at least to spill the blood of thine own likeness, derived of the drops of the most precious juice in thee; who, harboured—as thy guest—in the secret corners of my tender flanks, takes daily nurture with increase of life by the vital inspiration of nature, and whose innocence (if I die by thy cruelty) will not fail in the other world to summon thee afore the high Throne of justice, where I expect the just revenge of the undeserved wrong, wherewith (contrary to the nature of loyal lovers) thou rewardest her, that erst loved thee not so dearly as now she persecutes thee with mortal hate, even until the last hour of her life. PANDORA."

The first view of this letter was of hard digestion to Parthenope; who, albeit the fear which he had, that Pandora would murder (as she did indeed) the fruit congealed of the substance of them both in her entrails, presented a certain remorse afore the eyes of his conscience, yet, because she would never afore let him understand that she was with child, he thought it was but a new means to allure him eftsoons to the traffic of her affairs. Whereupon, using as little regard

to the contents of the letter as he made small account of her that writ it, despatched the messenger with this short answer: "Thou shalt," saith he, "declare to thy mistress that if she had heretofore imparted to me the effect of thy present message, she would have disposed of me and my friendship at her pleasure, but now, seeing she craves my assistance by necessity, I commit her to the meed of her own folly." Whereof Pandora, being advertised by the heavy report of her Finea, who also alleged despair eftsoons to recover the friendship or company of the knight, entered forthwith into such disposition of melancholy, with imaginations of revenge, that, converting the appetite of her ancient love into an humour of deadly hate, doubted whether she should use force against herself, for the spite of the villainy he had done to her, or persecute him unto death whose life she utterly detested. And wavering thus in contrariety of opinions, she sought to appease somewhat the fury of her present dolour, by recording her grief with these lamentable terms:

"Alas!" saith she, "if this be the reward of true loyalty, what assurance may we repose in constancy? Or what meed to be expected in the virtue of such unfeigned friendship, as I professed to this unthankful and perjured knight? Have I refused the service of so many gentlemen, offering frankly to employ their times under the beck of my commandment, to make my affection subject to one who, having already culled out of me the fruits of his desire, smiles now at my simplicity, and laughs to see me languish in dole? Ah! why were the eyes of my mind so dimmed with the mist of fond zeal that I could not consider the common malice of men nowadays; who, preferring their humble service with all kind of oaths, dying a thousand times a day for our sakes, yea! offering their lives to all kind of peril, do seem to remain prisoners in the ward of our good-will, until their feigned importunities, prevailing above the weak resistance of us poor wretches, do place them in the possession of their desire? And being once made lords over that which only could command them afore, God knoweth how soon they revolt, turning their fervent affection into a contempt of our fragility! If I had as carefully cast all arguments of future disquiet, as I was ready to open mine ears to the sugared breath of his charms, I had eschewed the evil with the cause; neither had I stood (as I do now) ready to enter into the hard penance of

my former folly. Ah! most unthankful Parthenope! how canst thou so easily forget her who was no niggard in satisfying thy desires, and whose beauty thou seemedst erst to have in no less admiration than if I had been sent from above for the only solace of thy life? Hath thy present cruelty prevailed wholly above the glory of thine ancient virtue? Or hast thou utterly dismissed the remembrance of thy oath and protestation of faith, which ought to call thy conscience to a remorse, forcing a performance of thy promise?

"Whereof, also," saith she, casting her watery eyes down to her big belly, "thou hast left me a pawn, which, witnessing no less thy disloyalty against me than avouching the friendship thou hast found at my hands, ought to knock at the door of thy conscience for some consideration of pity towards her whom without cause thou dost shamefully abuse. Oh! unhappy and wretched lady that I am, in what company can I show my head, wherein the bigness of my belly (bringing the blood of shame unto my face), will not accuse me of treason towards my husband, being so long time absent? What wrong doth the world to my wickedness, if every man salute me by the name of a common and arrant strumpet, who, defacing her ancient honour and house with the lascivious exercise of adulterous abuse, deserveth to be registered in the slanderous book of black defame with a crown of infamy for ever? Whereunto, like as thy subtle practices, O caitiff knight, hath advanced me; so thy tyranny in the end shall take away the life of those two who ought to be far more dear unto thee than thou seemest to account them."

Wherewith, falling into altercations of more fury, she began a cruel war with her fair hair, printing her nails without respect in the rosy dye of her fair face, bedewing her bosom and skirts of outward garments with the drops of tears distilling from her crystal eyes, and entering thus into the pageant of rage, had here played the last act of the tragedy in executing herself, if the presence of Finea had not prevented the fact; who, stirring up rather the appetite of revenge in her mistress, than ministering persuasion to patience or moderation in her dolour, incensed her by all the wicked devices she could imagine, to wreak her just anger upon the villainous body of him that so sinisterly procured her passion of undeserved dole. Whereunto, albeit Pandora gave diligent ear, with desire to put her advice into execution, yet, having

not utterly drained her stomach of all complaints, renewed eftsoons her exclamation in this sort :

" Ah ! " saith she, " why was not I traded in the magical sciences of the Cochian Medea or the Italian Circe, whose cunning (working marvellous in the like affairs) hath left an immortality to their names to all ages ? Certainly, if the heavens had revealed unto me any skill in the mystery of their arts, either should Parthenope be mine, or else would I rain the shower of vengeance upon him, and her that enjoyeth the meed of my merit, with such impetuosity, that the sequel of the world should have no less cause to chronicle my doings, than they seem commonly to confirm and allow the acts of the two former enchantresses. And thou, Finea, shouldest have me to forget him, in whose love I dote, although I wish nothing so much as his utter destruction. And now do I see the due reward of my former unchaste conversation, for the fervent affection which I bear him doth now yield me double usury of the wanton liberty wherein I have lived hitherunto ; neither shall I be enjoined to other penance for my fault than a loathsome despair which attends (if I do not recover him whom I have lost, or have speedy means to revenge the wrong he hath done me) to cut in sunder the strings of my life. Wherefore, being resolved in some part to follow thy advice, so must I also use thy travail in the execution of my first attempt, which is that thou go forthwith to the vale of Camonica in the country of Brescia, which (as they say) is not without great store of cunning sorcerers ; amongst whom it is necessary that thou learn (whatsoever it cost) some enchantment of so great virtue, that it may not only restore me eftsoons to the friendship of him whom I think hath utterly forsaken me, but, by the conjuration of their charm, have power to remove the veil of his affection from his new wife, that, making no more account of her, he may from henceforth dissolve the league of amity between them for ever. Wherein, if the effect of my desire be furthered by a success of thy diligence, assure thyself, thy travail shall be so thankfully employed, that, christening thee henceforth by the name of my sister, there shall be neither riches nor commodity anyway proper or due unto me, which shall not be common to us both."

Finea, who was not so ready to obey her mistress in this devilish enterprise, as given of herself to be a fit minister of

evil, descending with expedition into the vale of Camonica, gat, by the help of those sprites and limbs of the devil inhabiting that hellish island, certain flowers gathered in the wane of the moon, with drugs and other trumpery of witchcraft, requisite for conjurers and such as occupy the pernicious trade of enchanting. All which legerdemains and devices of Satan were as available to the furthering of the enterprise of Pandora, as there is certainty or assurance in the operation of that dark and hellish science, what invocation soever they make of the name of God ; Who, being the Father and Author of all truth, will never have the triumphant glory of His name polluted with the cursed ceremonies of such idolatries, neither will He bow down His ears to the petition of such diabolical diviners, who, practising to seduce the simple sort with charms of sorceries, do prefer the absolute destruction of their own soul. And truly the Almighty (Whose judgments are inscrutable) is content sometime to suffer those conjurers and enchanters (the very officers of hell), as well for the scourge of our sins as to manifest their own infidelity, to work many great and incredible wonders—as we read of the magicians in Egypt before Pharaoh ; the enchantress stirring up the spirit of Samuel in the presence of Saul, King of the Hebrews ; and Simon, the conjurer, honoured as a God of the foolish prince and people of Rome—to the end the faithful flock (strengthened and confirmed, by the grace of the Holy Spirit) may glory in their assured belief in the true God, by the peremptory fall of those infidels, together with all such as unhappily listen to their pernicious doctrine.

Here Pandora, seeing all her devices (accompanied with a crooked fortune) return a success contrary to her meaning, began to enter into a new passion of such rage and despair, that she had even now dismissed the residue of her days by the fatal doom of her own hands, if she had not been eftsoons interrupted by Finea, who, for the appeasing of her present dole, preferred unto her the aid of a gray friar, a great ghostly father in that city, whom she affirmed to have wrought marvellous effects by the help of certain distilled waters, tempered with the juice of strong herbs, growing secretly within the entrails of the earth, the nature of hidden stones and metals, powders and seeds not known to many, with diverse suffumigations incident to witchcraft ; and who, indeed, was noted to have bestowed more of his time in the

study of that dark art and philosophy of Satan than in turning over the sacred volumes of Holy Scripture and Testament of the Lord, which ought to be the only exercise of those that are clad in the habit of religion.

Behold here an example of great virtue in our Abbey men ; who, being apparelled in a simple habit in sign of humility, do carry the devil in the cowl of their hoods, and who (according to Saint Augustine) being the chief pillars that sustain superstition, are also the greatest friends to idolatry, dimming the purity of religion (which they ought to honour and profess with sincere imitation) with a cloud of such darkness of the devices of the devil, that the only vapour of their poisoned infection is able to corrupt the whole air with a contagious pestilence. How should the ignorant be guided in the right way to salvation, if they which ought to open the light of the Gospel do give manifest examples of errors ? Or how can the glory of God be renowned amongst men, if they which, standing in the pulpit of truth, and ought sincerely to preach the law of the Lord, do convert their duty towards the true religion into practices of necromancy and terms of invocation of devils ; unprofitable members certainly, deserving rather to be utterly weeded out of the commonwealth, than (nourished in the idle trade of an abbey loon) to be suffered (under the veil of godliness and devotion) to practise heinous conspiracies against God and man ? But what ? Do I meddle this part of my history with the office of the preacher, to whom it chiefly belongeth to treat upon the sundry abuses committed daily in nunneries and other like tenements of Babylon ? To this holy father, then, comes Pandora with a countenance all clad with sorrow, declaring the circumstance of her love passed, the cause of her present passion, with the whole discourse of her former life hitherunto, craving (with great intercession in the end) the assistance of his art, for moderation in the martyrdom which she endured by the fervent affection she bare to the knight.

The friar (notwithstanding his vow and straight oath of his order) had not his conscience so armed with the virtue of charity, nor his hands so clean washed from the covetous desire of filthy gain, but he received certain pieces of gold of Pandora, whom he persuaded should buy certain drugs and other necessaries, which he thought convenient to the making of his diabolical confection. But, to be short, these charms

and deceitful perfumes of the friar were of equal operation in this enterprise to the herbs and other helps, lately gathered in the vale Camonica by the woman of Pandora ; who, seeing herself utterly defied of fortune, in receiving semblable success in all her magical devices, expecting withal a speedy return of her husband, determined to avenge the disloyalty of her lover upon the fruit stirring in her own womb—being now six months since she conceived—thinking she should never be void of desire to see Parthenope, or at least to revenge his treason, until she had utterly extirpated the roots of that seed which he had sown in the soil of her tender sides.

O cruelty more than barbarous ! Is it possible that a gentlewoman of so tender years, derived of honest parentage, nourished in civility, and, that which more is, a Christian, born in the heart of Europe, should so much forget the fear of God and regard of His laws, as, in augmenting the heinous fault of the wrong already done against her husband by so many and unchaste adulteries, to commit in the end an execrable effusion of the blood derived of the drops of her own substance? O how cursed and unhappy is the condition of them that, declining for want of grace from the path of reason, do suffer themselves to be led by the line of fleshly appetite, the chiefest means that makes us forget God and all good order ! For this Pandora, desirous to cover her fault, albeit not able to hide her big belly, assayed to destroy the creature—moving within her—by crushing her sides with great force, drinking caudles made for the nonce, and swallowing diverse other powders of such strong confection, that their vehement operation within her had been able to prevail above the strength of the highest complexion of the world.

Albeit, seeing her expected success of this beastly policy was also denied her, she devised a last means for the accomplishment of her enterprise, which the very enemy of nature, I am sure, would abhor to imagine ; which was that—seeing she could not be delivered by the assistance of sorceries, purgations, nor other policy which the art of enchanting was able to lend her—she resolved (as a bloody butcher of her own blood) to break the bed of the infant within her entrails, and drive it out of her womb by very force. Wherein she was assisted by Finea, who, according to the commandment of her mistress, carrying a silver basin into the highest turret in the house, went thither immediately both together ; where,

after the doors were shut on all sides, Pandora, with a troubled countenance, all panting for the horror of the act which she meant to execute, beholding her belly with serpentine eyes sparkling with flames of fury, said unto her maid :

" Like as alas ! thou knowest, Finea, how extremely I am dealt withal at the hands of the thrice wretched Parthenope, who (without any respect to the pain which I endure) hath utterly disclaimed mine acquaintance, with less regard to preserve the seeds which he hath grafted and left growing within me, even so thou art not ignorant of the endeavour I have used to reclaim him, and rampire myself eftsoons in his favour ; whereof the one is no less unlikely than the other dangerous. And, being spited of fortune, heaven and earth seem also to bend the force of their malice against mine attempts. Albeit I could somewhat moderate the extremity of my passion, if the view of my great belly did not renew the rage of my fever ; wherein I die a thousand times, having anything afore mine eyes that either representeth his likeness, or moveth any cause of remembrance of that detestable wretch, who (as I hope) shall never take pleasure in any child of his engendered in the body of Pandora. And as I have assayed diverse ways (as thou knowest) to discharge me of this burden, wherein I have nothing prevailed, because my destiny contends against my endeavour, even so, being not able any longer to conceal my fault, nor cover my womb swelled with the wicked seed of his generation—and seeing withal my husband is now upon the point of his return—I am determined to commit my life to extreme peril ; to the end to dispatch me of this burden, which I hate as much as other women take pleasure to bear and bring forth with so great contentment. And if I could as largely command over him as I have power to work the spite of his wrong upon the pawn he hath left within me, I assure thee these hands should make no less strange anatomy of his carcase, than I mean forthwith, in thy presence, to dismember the monster which, by his act, I feel stir in the inner parts of my reins."

Wherein Finea, hearing this devilish resolution, preferred persuasions to the contrary, alleging that the horror were too great that a mother should become the tyrannous murderess of herself and child at one instant. " And," saith she, " touching your being with child, there be means enough to keep it secret without using any cruelty, in killing the innocent

creature, which ought not to bear the penance of the fault of the father.

"Tush! tush!" saith this she-wolf and merciless Medea, "that evil is but light where counsel takes place. Do away these persuasions and dispose thyself to assist me; for otherwise thou shalt see me die in thy presence, and then thy preaching shall be in vain to her that is absolutely resolved to pursue the end of her meaning."

"What is it then that I shall do?" saith Finea.

To whom (as a cruel Megaera coming out of the hollow and dark places of the infernal valleys) she enjoined her this first charge: "Get thee up," saith she, "upon that high coffer there, and I will spread my belly along upon the ground, with my back upward. And so, with all thy force, thou shalt leap upon my reins; which I hope will be a means to open an issue for this cursed burden which is so grievous for me to carry. Wherein, if thou use the uttermost of thy force, thou shalt restore me to speedy contentment; but if thou spare to employ thy whole strength, thou shalt prolong my pain, driving me to make mine own hands the ministers of my meaning."

Finea, not liking greatly the charge of such commission, and much less the execution in so horrible a manner, although the terror of the fact troubled her for a time, yet, being of long time acquainted with the conditions and cruelty of her mistress, mounts upon the high chest, leaping seven or eight times together upon the back of Pandora, with such impetuosity, that any man would have thought that so many blows, with the heavy sway of all her body, had been able to have broken the bones of her back, and dispatched the mother and child together. But all these traffics being in vain, prolonged but the pain of Pandora; who, doubling her rage with this repulse of her enterprise, entered into devices of more mischief and tyranny not almost to be talked of. What heart alas! is so indurated with the metal of hardness, but the horror of this hellish cruelty will move it to distil drops of blood? What countenance so assured that can withhold his tears, or not shrink at the tyrannous disposition of this lioness? Or what ears will not stand up at the tragical discourse of this strange kind of child-bearing?

Truly, I know that virtuous ladies (sprinkled with the dew of pity) will not only tremble at the remembrance of the

inordinate cruelty of this cursed mother, but also open the conduits of their compassions, weeping on the behalf of the torment wherein unnaturally she plunged the innocent imp which nature had formed of the substance of herself; who, converted from the shape of a woman into the disposition of a devil, raging without measure, that she could not be delivered, howled out at last with a horrible cry full of impiety and blasphemy in this sort: "Seeing," saith she, "that both God and the devil deny me their assistance, I will (in spite of their powers) rid me of thee, O cursed and execrable creature!"

Wherewith, possessed wholly with the spirit of fury, having her eyes sunk into her head, her stomach panting, and her face all full of black blood, by the vehemency of the conflict which she had endured, she began to leap with all her force from the top of the coffer down to the ground, bruising her sides with her hands and playing on the drum with her fists upon her great belly, with such huge blows that, feeling even now the little creature within her removed from his place, ready to drop out of her womb, called for the succour of Finea, who, standing in place of a midwife, received in a silver basin an infant male, unlawfully conceived, bedewed as yet with the wet suds of his wicked mother, sprawling and breathing with a little air of life. Which dolorous spectacle, moving Finea to present compassion, drove her into tears of great dole; as well that for she saw so fair a creature driven out of his habitation before his due time, and without the consent of nature, as also to see it ready to be laid upon the polluted altar of immolations, for an offering to the devil, afore it were washed and purified through the sacred sacrament of baptism. O horrible and execrable condition of an Italian, who, being fostered in the miry vale Camonica, amongst the witches and cursed enchanterers, sucked there the vice of her nurse with the milk of her pap!

Albeit, I could make comparison of the like cruelty executed in the greatest city of France by a gentlewoman of that country, who, being newly delivered of the burden of her belly, made a beastly sacrifice of it in the fire, and that with the consent and in the presence of the detestable palliard that begat it, deserving both to be invested with the title of cursed parents and bloody butchers of the seeds congealed of their own substance, saving that the end of this unfortunate infant was more tragical, and the doings of his mother more

detestable ; who, exceeding the brutal cruelty of the wolf, tigress, or lioness, ravening amongst the flock of little lambs in the fat and fertile fields of Lybia, seeing her thus discharge of her burden, began also to dismiss the greatness of her dolour, and, beholding with her eyes—shining like the blaze of two torches with the flame of fury—the new-born creature sprawling in the basin, began to whet her teeth, shaking her head with horrible regards, prognosticating the last act of the rage which she had yet to play ; saying unto Finea :

" Dost thou not see how this little beast resembles already the image of his perjured father ? Behold now, I pray thee, his countenance and mark the sundry likelihoods that even now appear in his face, arguing undoubtedly that (if life would give leave to his inclination) his detestable disposition would be nothing inferior to the villainy of him whose traitorous disloyalty hath made me (as thou seest) the cursed minister of inordinate cruelty. And if I had the like power over him that is the cause of this unnatural passion, I would assuredly enjoin him such penance, that his just chastisement should import a terror to all traitors that hereafter should seek to seduce any lady by sugared words."

Wherewith, bending her looks towards the little imp (hasting to his end by the second conflict he had endured by his mother and her maid afore his eyes were unsealed to see the light of this world), she wished eftsoons the presence of Parthenope. " Upon whom," saith she, " since I am unhappily denied to wreak my vengeance in such sort as I would, at least I will content myself for the time to see thee punished in the place of him whose picture thou rightly presentest, as a true pattern shaped of the mass of his substance. And, seeing thy destiny is to incur the penance due to thy father, the pain of thy execution shall be nothing inferior to the merit of his execrable fault. Wherein," saith she, " arm yourselves, O my hands, with courage, and shrink not to be the ministers of the punishment which my tongue hath pronounced ! Rejoice, O my heart, in the effusion of his blood, whose death brings repose to the long passion of thy dolours ! And you, mine eyes, laugh your full, to see the dismembering of him whom I mean to offer as a sacrifice of vengeance on the behalf of Parthenope, whose remembrance (with the blood of his son) I will presently root out of my mind for ever ! "

Certainly, good ladies, my heart, abhorring no less the remembrance of this bitchfox, than my spirit troubled with trembling fear at the continuance of her cruelty, gives such impediment to my pen that it is scarce able to describe unto you the last act of her rage : wherein this limb of the infernal lake, not worthy any longer to bear the name of a woman, proceeding to the end of her enterprise, takes up her son with her bloody and murdering hands, whom, without all compassion and contrary to the order of a Christian, she beats with all her force against the walls, painting the posts and pavements in the chamber with the blood and brains of the innocent creature newborn. Wherewith, not yet contented nor satisfied in her rage, she takes in either of her hands one of the tender legs of the child now dead, and dividing them as the butcher joints his lamb or young goat, which he lays upon his stall to be sold, fell of a sudden laughter in sign of the great pleasure she took in this execution, wishing, notwithstanding, to enter into the same exercise with him of whom this deformed carrion (as she termed this dismembered infant) took his first beginning.

Here, if I should prefer the particular discourse of the exploits of this second Medea and execrable monster of our time, I could not escape, I am sure, without the secret grudges of some, who, having made large sale of their honour at too low a price, and getting in like sort the bit of frantic jealousy between their teeth, do study nothing but the art of revenge. Albeit, because the virtue of honest and chaste ladies shall shine the clearer by the dark eclipse of such common enemies of the whole sex feminine, I will yet treat of the tyranny of this Pandora, who reserved the extreme point of her Jewish cruelty until the last act of her tragedy. For, martyring the dead child, and treading it under her feet, she thrust her hand under his short ribs, and taking out his heart gnawed it (as a bitch of Hyrcania) between her teeth into little morsels, saying that she hoped one day to provide the like banquet for Parthenope, which should confirm the quiet she felt in the present death and detestable execution of his image and likeness. And having her hand yet dyed with the blood of this guiltless imp of nature, she could not be rid of the importunate devil that possessed her, until she had brought the river of her rage unto the extreme brink of tyranny, neither could her heart be brought to appeasement so long as her eyes

fed upon the view of the dead infant. Wherefore, calling in a great mastiff cur, she gave him, by piecemeal, the members of her child, an act sure of no less detestation afore the high throne of God than to be abhorred of all the world.

Alas! have the Italian mothers no other tombs for their children, than to bury them in the belly of a dog? Be these the tears wherewith they accompany them into the shrouding sheet? Is this the courtesy of Italy, or a cruelty derived of the barbarious nation? But how could she expose other fruits outwardly than according to the nature of the spirit which possessed her within? For the devil, being seized of her heart, made her body and other members the ministers of her will: which God doth oftentimes suffer, as well for the due correction of heinous faults as also for an example and terror of all offenders in the like affairs.

I am loath, good ladies, to pass any further in the pursuit of this dolorous tragedy; because (your eyes already wearied with weeping) methinks, I see also your ears offer to close themselves against the report of this Pandora, whose only offence had been enough to stain your whole sex with perpetual infamy, if the pure chastity of so many of you offered not to confute the slander by your virtue only. Neither can the impudent and wicked life of such double curtals (as she was) impair the estimation of them that, with the intent of pure integrity, do rather give suck to their honour with the milk of simplicity, than, being Italianated with all subtleties, trusting only in the humour of their own brain, do fall at last into the common slander of all the world. For a familiar proof whereof I leave you to scan the order and doings of this Pandora, who, waxing now somewhat cold in her former passions of frenzy and rage, began to be pinched with the pangs incident commonly to all women in the painful travail of child-bearing. Whereof, going to bed, she caused certain baines to be provided; wherein washing herself, the next day (being hallowed and a feast of great solemnity) she was carried in a rich couch to visit the company of other ladies, amongst whom she was not worthy to keep place, being the shameful butcher of her own blood and wicked enemy to the life of man.

Herein is to be noted the destruction of a woman banished the palace of reason; together with the due meed of their merit, who, for the respect of a little pleasure (of no more continuance than a moment), do put their honour upon terms

of infamy, and their souls in hazard of everlasting torment. Here the adulterers may see how justly God punisheth their infidelity and breach of oaths towards their husbands. Let also the young ladies and little girls learn to direct the course of their youth by the contrary of this example; and being once registered in the book of marriage, let them stand upon their guard for falling into the like follies. For there is nothing committed in secret, but in the end it bursts out to a common bruit: which our Saviour Christ affirmeth by the mouth of the prophet, saying that whatsoever is done in the darkest corner of the house shall be published in the end in open audience. And he who seeks most to conceal his fault, is not only (by the permission of God) the first opener of the same, but also bears the badge of shame afore the face of the world, and stands in danger of grace in the presence of Him from Whom no secret can be hid.

FOURTH TALE

THE ALBANIAN CAPTAIN

THE ARGUMENT

It may seem to some that delight in the report of other men's faults, with respect rather to take occasion of sinister exclamation than be warned by their evils to eschew the like harms in themselves, that I have been too prodigal in noting the doings and lives of diverse ladies and gentlewomen declining by misfortune from the path of virtue and honour, only to stir up cause of reproach and leave to confirm their fond opinion. Albeit, as their error appeareth sufficiently in the integrity of my meaning, so I hope the indifferent sort will give another judgment of my intent; the rather for that I have preferred these discourses, both for the profit of the present glory of them that be past, and instruction of such as be to come; seeing withal they discover more cause of rebuke and vices more heinous in men, than any we find committed by women. And albeit the history last recited hath set forth in lively colours the fury and mad disposition of a woman forced by disloyalty, yet if a man may anyway excuse sin, it may in some sort be dispensed withal, or at least with more reason than the tyrannous execution following, committed by a man without occasion; where a certain jealousy sprung of an unjust mislike (as she thought) is ready to cover the fault of Pandora. For what is he so ignorant in the passions of love that will not confess that jealousy is an evil exceeding all the torments of the world, supplanting oftentimes both wit and reason in the most wise that be, specially when appeareth the like treason that Pandora persuaded herself to receive by him that forsook her. But for the other, how can he be acquitted from an humour of a frantic man, who, without any cause of offence in the world, commits cruel execution upon his innocent wife, no less fair and furnished in all perfections than chaste and virtuous without comparison? Neither is jealousy the cause of murder, considering that the opinion is no sooner conceived than there followeth, as it

were, a distrust of the party that thinks to receive the wrong, with an indifferent desire to them both to stand upon their guard, in sort like two enemies working the mutual destruction the one of the other. Whereof, leaving the judgment to them that be of good stomach to digest all kinds of meats, or can carry a train to buckle with the fumes of every broth that is offered them, I have here to expose unto you a miserable accident, happening in our time, which shall serve as a bloody scaffold or theatre, wherein are presented such as play no parts but in mortal and furious tragedies.

During the siege and miserable sack of Modon (a city of the Moors, confining upon the Sea Peloponnese, nor far from the Strait of Isthmia, by the which the Venetians convey their great traffic and trade of merchandise), Bajazet, the Emperor of the Turks, and great-grandfather to Sultan Solyman who this day governeth the state of the orient, used so many sorts of inordinate cruelties in the persecution of those wretches whom fate, with extreme force of his war, had not only abandoned from the soil of their ancient and natural abode, but also (as people full of desolation and void of succour everyway) forced then to crave harbour of the limitrophal towns adjoining their country, to shroud their weary bodies, bleeding still with the wounds of their late war, and overcome besides with the violence of hunger and cold—two common enemies that never fail to follow the camp of misery. And as in a general calamity every man hath his fortune, so, amongst the unhappy crew of these fugitives and creatures full of care, there was one gentleman no less noble by descent than worthily renowned by the glory of his own acts ; who, accounting it a chief and principal virtue to withstand the malice of fortune with magnanimity of mind, thought it not also the office of a noble heart to yield to the sentence of adversity, or give any place to the injury of present time, considering that in every distress Fortune beareth the greatest sway ; whose malice is neither of perpetuity, nor yet to be feared of such as have their hearts armed with assurance in virtue. For as she is no less uncertain of herself than her doings full of mutability, so, according to the advice of the philosopher, she is to be used with such indifference of all estates, that we need neither laugh when she smiles, nor fear when she threats. Neither hath she any to follow the chariot

of her victory but the caitiff or coward, and such as are denied the assistance and benefit of true virtue.

This gentleman (whom mine author termeth by the name of Piero Barzo), weary even now with drawing the heavy yoke of hard exile, left the rest of his countrymen and companions of care complaining their mutual miseries together, and retired to the rich and populous city of Mantua ; where his civil government and prudent behaviour (accompanied with a singular dexterity in exploits of arms and other exercises of chivalry, arguing the unfeigned nobleness of his mind) gave such a show of his virtue, that he was not only in short time entertained of the Marquis and governor there, but also made general of the whole army of footmen. Where, enjoying thus the benefits of his virtue—who commonly leads no less success to such as embrace her with true imitation, and tread the path of her lore with semblable sincerity of mind—he had there with him at the same instant his wife, being also of Modon, derived of no less nobility than he, and nothing inferior in all gifts of nature and ornaments of virtue. For touching her beauty, seeming of such wonderful perfection that it was thought nature was driven to the end of her wits in framing a piece of so great excellence, they doubted not to give her thereby the title of the fair Helen of Greece. Neither was she less meritorious for her virtues ; being blessed therewith so plentifully at the hands of the Almighty, that it was doubted to the writers of that time whether God or nature deserved the greatest praise in forming so perfect a creature.

If this were a consolation and singular contentment of the poor Modonese—weighing erst in the balance of his unhappy fortune, denied any more to enjoy the freedom of his country, driven by force from the ancient succour and solace of his friends, wandering in woods and desert places unknown, and (that which worse is) left only to the mercy of hunger and cold, with expectation to fall eftsoons into the hands of his enemies ; and now to be taken from the malice of all these miseries and restored to a place of abode, riches and entertainment sufficient for sustentation, to bear office and authority among the best, and rampired besides with the assured good-will and opinion of the chief governor of a country—I appeal to the opinions of those who erst have changed their miserable condition, or state of adversity, with

the benefit and goodness of the like fortune. Or if, again, he had cause to rejoice and make sacrifice to his fortune. that had given him a wife noted to be the odd image of the world for beauty, behaviour, courtesy, and upright dealing, constant without cause or argument of dishonesty, and (that which is the chiefest ornament and decoration of the beauty of a woman, to be of disposition ready to obey her husband, yielding him sovereignty with a dutiful obedience, with other virtues that made her an admiration to the whole multitude, and her life a spectacle to the ladies of her age to behold and imitate the like virtues—I leave it to the judgment of that small number of happy men who (by a special grace from above) are ordained to enjoy the benefit of so rare and precious a gift.

This couple, thus rejoicing the return of happy life, resigned withal their tears of ancient dole, and embraced the gift of present time, with intent to spend the remainder of their years in mutual consolation and contentment of mind. Wherein they were assisted with a second blessing of God; Who, for the increase of their new comfort, sent them a daughter, who in beauty, virtue, and all other gifts of grace, did nothing degenerate from the pattern and mould from which she was derived. Whereof she gave great shows as nature seemed to increase her years and confirm her in discretion.

But what assurance is there in the pleasure of people, seeing the world itself is appointed his date, which he cannot pass; or why should we repose a perpetuity in our worldly affairs, seeing that both their continuance and confidence ends with the length of time? And Fortune, who is always jealous of the ease of man, and not content to let us live long in quiet, is always laying her ambush, devising how to interrupt our felicity. And as she is blind of herself, and less certainty in her doings, so she forgets not to discover her conspiracies when we least think of her, and invade us when we account us most sure of her friendship.

Whereof she gave a manifest declaration in the person of this fair lady; from whom she took her dear husband in the flower of his years, and she not yet confirmed in age and discretion able to bear and withstand the ordinary assaults of the world. Which she found also of more uneasy toleration, as well for the fervent zeal and affiance which law of

kind did bind her to bear to her late spouse and loyal husband, as, also, for that she saw herself left amongst the hands of strangers, far from her parents and friends, void of refuge in her own country, and without a head to defend her from the malice of men, which commonly rageth with more extremity against weak and desolate widows and poor fatherless orphans, than against them that are able to withstand their malice and repress their violence with equal power.

And albeit she was left to her own liberty to live as she list (as you have heard), and not yet feeling the burden of twenty winters (an age fit to engender suspicion of the evil-disposed), yet, having no less care to prevent the malice of slander than to keep in entire the small revenue left unto her by her husband, she took order with her domestical affairs according to her present fortune. And so, dismissing her ordinary train of servants, retired to a brother of hers, which dwelt also in the same town ; where, after the funerals of her dead husband were performed with sufficient tears and duties appertaining, she qualified somewhat her dole for him that was dead, with the daily view of her young daughter (the lively image of her father), sometimes also exercising the endeavour of the needle (a recreation most convenient for widows and all honest matrons), never being seen abroad but of holy and great festival days, when she went in devout manner to the church to hear the divine service of God ; being unhappily espied (for all that) of an Albanian captain, a noble gentleman thereabout, having for the credit of his virtue and valiantness in arms the charge of certain troops of horsemen.

Who, glancing at unawares upon the glistering beams of her beauty, became so desirous eftsoons to encounter the same, that, with the often view of her stately personage and general fame of her many virtues, he became so in love with her, that (for speedy ease of his present grief) he was driven to put his request upon terms ; making first his sighs and sad countenance, his solitary complexion of face often given to change, his dolorous state and often pitiful regards of the eye when he was in her company, forced now and then to abandon the same because he could not keep him from tears, his often greeting her with salutations in amorous order, courting her now and then with letters, ditties, and presents of great price, with a thousand other vain importunities which love doth

imagine to animate his soldiers, his chiefest ministers to bewray his intent and solicit his cause. Whereof the effect returned no less frustrate, than the device itself ought to seem vain in the eye of all wise men : for she whose heart could not be erst pierced with the malice of her former fortune, nor be brought to stoop to the lure of adversity, thought it a great fault to let love or folly make any breach, where so many hot assaults and causes of despair had been valiantly resisted and utterly repulsed.

For proof whereof, being wholly wed as yet to the remembrance of her dead husband, she would neither admit his clients nor give audience to his ambassadors, but dismissed both the one and the other with semblable hope : which brought the captain in such case, that it seemed to him a harder matter to compass the good-will of his lady, than to govern an army or to plant a battery with the advantage of the ground and place. Neither was he able to withdraw his affection or mortify the fire newly burst out to flame ; because the remembrance of her beauty, the often view of her virtue enlarged by the general fame of all men, together with the nobleness of her race enrolled in the records of antiquity, presented a more desire in him with care to obtain her, and aggravated his grief in being repulsed of that which his heart had already vowed to honour till the extreme date of his days. Neither had he the face eftsoons to attempt her of himself, and much less to desist from the pursuit of his desire ; but, being at the point to incur the hazard of despair, behold ! love preferred a new and most sure means, willing him to crave the assistance of her brother ; who, being his dear friend and companion-in-arms in the service of diverse princes aforetime, he made no less account of his furtherance, than if he had already gotten his friendship. Wherefore delaying no moment of time, but plying his ware whilst the water was warm, he accosted the young man at a convenient time, and raved at him in this short sort :

" It is, my dear friend and companion, a virtuous disposition to be ready in well-doing, and easy to assist honest requests : which to your nature hath been always no less peculiar than to me now a courage in so honest a case to crave your aid. Neither can the virtue of true friendship more lively appear, or the office of assured friends more amply be discerned, than in making the grief of the one common to

both, and bear the gift of time and fortune indifferently with mutual affection and like zeal on both parts. Wherein, for my part, I would I had as good means to make declaration of my true heart towards you, as of long time I have vowed to be yours to the uttermost of my power, and you no less desire to do me good than your diligence and assistance of friendship is most able to stand me in stead in my present case, of no less importance than the very safeguard of my life."

Which last words made the Modonese reply with like frank offer of mind, protesting unto him by the faith of a soldier, that if ever he felt any motion in himself to do him the least good in the world, his desire was double to requite it; proferring herewith, for a further show of his good meaning and declaration of faith, to rack his power on his behalf, so far forth as either life, living, or honour would bear him.

But he whose desire tended not to things impossible, nor sought to maintain war against the heavens, reposing much for himself in the offer of his friend, thought the conquest was half won when he had promised his assistance. And because there lacked nothing but to utter his grief, he told him that the thing he desired would bring advancement to them both.

"And because," saith he, "I will clear the doubt which seems to trouble you, you shall understand that the beauty, gifts of grace, and other honest parts in your sister, have so enchanted my senses, that, having already lost the use of my former liberty, I cannot eftsoons be restored without the speedy assistance of her good-will: neither have I other power of myself, or consolation in my present extremity, than such as is derived of the hope which I have hereafter to enjoy her as my lawful wife. For, otherwise, I am as void of foul meaning to work her dishonour for the fervent love I bear her, as free from intent to procure so great a spot of infamy to the house which nourished you both in so great honour. And, to be plain with you, the glimmering glances of her twinkling eyes, together with a princely majesty, which nature hath lent her above the rest of the dames of our days, hath made my heart more assaultable and apt to admit parley, than either the noise of the cannon or terror of the enemy, how great soever they have appeared, have heretofore feared me: which makes me think that there is either some celestial or divine mystery shrouded under the veil of her

beauty, making me thereby yield her honour in hope of preferment ; or else, by the angry consent of my cursed destinies, it is she that is appointed to pay the interest of my former liberty, in transforning my ancient quiet into a thousand annoys of uneasy toleration. And albeit I have hitherto reserved the maidenhead of my affection, and lived no less free from the amorous delights or desires of women, yet, being now overtaken and tied in the chains of true affection, I had rather become captive, and yield myself prisoner in the pursuit of so fair a lady, than to have the honour of the greatest victory that ever happened to captain by prowess, or policy, or dint of cruel sword of his valiant soldiers. Wherefore, as your authority with your sister, is rather to command than to entreat, and by the friendship which hath remained indissoluble between us from the beginning, never giving place to any peril whatsoever it were, I conjure you, and as my last request beseech you, to aid me herein so far forth as your diligence may seem to work my desire to effect."

Whereunto the Modonese relpied with great thanks for the honour he offered him and his sister, whom he half promised already to frame according to his expectation, promising himself a great good hap, not only in entering into alliance with so noble a gentleman, but also that he should be the worker of the same. Whereupon embracing each other——the one glad to see so happy a success like to follow his business, the other no less joyful to have so fit a means to manifest his friendship towards his friend—departed with semblable contentment ;—the one to his lodging with a thousand hammers in his head till he saw the effect of his drift, the other with no less grief of mind till he had performed the expectation of his charge.

Wherein he began immediately to practise with his sister, whom he found of a contrary opinion, excusing herself with the care she had of her daughter, whom, she said, she would neither leave alone, nor commit herself to the order and government of strangers, at whose hands there is as great doubt of good entreaty, as small help or hope of amendment, being once made their vassal and subject by law of marriage.

"Besides, sir," saith she, not without some tears, "it is not yet a year since I lost him, whom if I loved by awe being alive, I ought with no less duty to honour after his death. Neither could I avoid the just murmur and ordinary

suspicion of the people, if I should seem more hasty to yield my affection to another, than ready to perform my duty and ceremonies of dole to him that is dead; and that within the year afore the funeral be fully ended. The widow's life is also pure of itself, bound to no care nor controlment of any, and so acceptable before God, that the apostle doubteth not to account her amongst the number of the religious, if, after she have once tasted of marriage and restored again to her liberty, she content herself with the first clog or burden of bondage, living after in imitation of true virtue. Besides, the holy man St. Augustine dissuadeth all widows eftsoons to marry, advising them to mortify such motions as the flesh is apt to stir up and nourish, by contemplation, and prayer, and true sincerity of life; saying further that they are accounted afore God amongst the number of chaste and pure virgins. And because it may be, peradventure, the opinion of some that the burden of widow is grievous and almost intolerable unto me—presuming the same rather by the greenness of my youth (not yet confirmed in ripeness of years and discretion) than upon any good or assured ground to justify their opinion—I assure you I feel myself so plentifully assisted with the spirit of grace, that I doubt no more to withstand all temptations and vain assaults which the wicked instigations of the flesh may hereafter minister unto me, than heretofore in tender years, when nature denied any such motion to stir in me, I lived free and void of such provocation. And for end, good brother, my heart, divining diversely of the success of this marriage, threateneth a further mischief to fall upon me, and too late a repentance for you that is the unfortunate causer of the same."

Here, her brother, knowing it a fault in all women to hear themselves well spoken of, and yet a chief means to win them, to feed their humour with flattering praise, began to join with her in commendation of her honesty, affirming her chaste conversation to be no less meritorious since she was a widow, than her pure virginity generally allowed and praised of all men afore she was married. "Which is the chiefest cause," said he, "that the captain desireth in honest sort to possess you." But touching any sinister success that might follow this sacred league of lawful matrimony—as she seemed to predestinate within herself—he ministered persuasions to the contrary, alleging the same to

be a superstitious folly attributed to the ancients of old times, to calculate their good or ill success by the tunes or charm of birds, or sometimes by the sudden encounter of beasts, or such men as they looked not for, arguing the same to be such absolute signs of ill luck that commonly they would refrain from their affairs all that day.

"And touching the murmur and suspicion of the people, whose tongues although they be naturally tipt with the metal of slander, yet ought you as little," saith he, "fear their malice, as care for their grudge; considering your act is no less acceptable afore God, than tolerable by the positive laws of man. Neither can they but judge well of your doings, and like better of your choice, seeing you are wooed with great importunities, and won by one that is of your own quality and nothing inferior to you in virtue of nobleness of race. But if you stick of any ceremonies which you have yet to perform to him that is dead, your error is greater than you may justify, and your wisdom less than is necessary in such a case: neither is the voice of the multitude in that respect of such continuance, but time can take it away, and a wonder lasteth not for ever. And, for my part, I hope you will compare my present meaning in this matter with the long experienced faith and affection which heretofore you have noted in me. Besides, I could not avoid the imputation of a monster and enemy to nature, if I should not be as careful of your quiet as of my own life; praying you for end, and as my last request, to repose yourself wholly upon my faith, and friendship and fidelity of him who honoureth you with no less than his life and all that he hath."

Wherewith he so much prevailed over his obedient sister, that she, being unhappily overcome with his vehement importunities, condescended very willingly to his unfortunate request; which after became the peremptory destruction of the poor widow, leaving too late and miserable a repentance to her brother.

Albeit, afore I proceed to the ceremonies of her unfortunate marriage, I thought good to tell unto you in this place the opinion of mine author touching the divination of the spirit of man; "who," saith he, "albeit, by a secret instinct and virtue of the mind, is able sometimes to presage that will fall, and the soul (being divine of itself) doth also prognosticate diversely of the future chances and changes of

things ; yet the body (being the house or harbourer of the mind), framed of the substance of clay or a thing of more corruption, doth so prevail and overcome the qualities and gifts of the mind, in casting a mist of darkness afore our understanding, that the soul is not only barred to expose the fruits of revelation, but also it is not beloved when she prognosticates a truth. Neither is it in the power of man to shun or shrink from that which the foreknowledge of the Highest hath already determined upon us, and much less to prevent or withstand the sentence of Him whose doom is as certain as Himself is truth. Wherein, because I am sufficiently justified by the authorities of diverse histories, as well sacred as profane, I will not stand here to enlarge the proof with copy of examples, but refer you to the reading of the sequel of this woeful lady, who, although her fate was revealed to her afore, yet was she denied to shun the destiny and sharp judgment which the heavens were resolved to thunder upon her."

But now to our purpose. The agreement thus made between the fair Greek lady and Don Spado, the valiant captain, there lacked nothing for consummation of the marriage but the assistance of the rites and ancient ceremonies appointed by order of Holy Church ; which the captain forgat not to procure with all expedition of time. And for the more honour and decoration of the feast, he had there the presence of the Marquis of Mantua, being there not so much for the honour of the bridegroom as to testify to the open face of the world the earnest affection he bare to her first husband Barzo, whom he accounted no less dear unto him for credit and trust, than the nearest friend of his blood. But now this Albanian, enjoying thus the fruits of his desire, could not so well bridle his present pleasure, nor conceal the singular contentment he conceived by the encounter of his new mistress, but, in public show, began to prate of his present felicity ; arguing the same to be of greater moment, than if he had been frankly restored to the title and dignity of a kingdom ; giving Fortune also her peculiar thanks, that had kept this good turn in store for him, saying that she could not have honoured him with a greater preferment than to put him into the possession of her who was without a second in all Europe.

But as in everything excess is hurtful, bringing with it a

double discommodity—I mean both a surfeit to the stomach by the pleasure we delight in, and a jealous loathing of the thing we chiefly love and hold most dear—so the extreme and superfluity of hot love of this fond husband towards his wife began, within the very month of the marriage, to convert itself into a contrary disposition, not much unlike the loving rage of the she-ape towards her young ones ; who, as the poets do affirm, doth use to choose among her whelps one whom she loves best and keeping it always in her arms doth cherish and loll it in such rude sort that, ere she is aware, she breaketh the bones and smothereth it to death, killing by this means with overmuch love the thing which yet would live if it were not for the excess of her affection.

In like sort, this Albanian, doting without discretion upon the desire of his new lady, and rather drowned beastly in the superfluity of her love than weighing rightly the merit and virtue of true affection, entered into such terms of fervent jealousy, that every fly that wafteth afore her made him sweat at the brows with the suspicion he had her beauty. Wherein he suffered himself to be so much subject and overcome with the rage of this folly, that, according to the jealous humour of the Italian, he thought every man that looked in her face, went about to graft horns in his forehead. O small discretion and less wisdom in one that ought, with the shape and form, to merit the name and virtue of a man ! What sudden change and alteration of fortune seems now to assail this valiant captain who erst loved loyally within the compass of reason, and now, doting without discretion, thinketh himself one of the forked ministers of Cornwall !

And albeit I must confess unto you that the more rare and precious a thing is of itself, the more diligence and regard ought we to use to preserve and keep it in good estate ; yet a wise and chaste woman, being one of the rarest things of the world and special gift of God, ought not to be kept in the mew, nor guarded with curious and continual watch, and much less attended upon with the jealous eyes of Argus : for like she that weigheth her honour and life in indifferent balance, not meaning to exchange the one but with the loss of the other, is not easily corrupted by any sugared train of flattering love, so the restraint of the liberty of women, together with a distrust proceeding of none occasion, is the chiefest means to seduce her that else hath vowed an honesty and integrity of life

even until the end of her natural days. And in vain goeth he about to make his wife honest, that either locks her in his chamber, or fills his house full of spies to note her doings, considering the just cause he gives her hereby to be revenged of the distrust he hath of her without occasion ; seeing withal the nature of some women is to enlarge their liberty that is abridged them in doing the thing they are forbidden, more in despite of the distrust of their foolish husbands, than for any appetite or expectation of any other contentment to themselves.

Neither hath this foolish humour of jealousy so much power to enter into the heart of the virtuous and wise man ; who neither will give his wife such cause to abuse herself towards him, nor suspect her without great occasion, nor yet give judgment of any evil in her, without a sure ground and manifest proof. And yet he is of such government for the correction of such a fault, that he had rather cloak and digest it with wisdom than make publication with open punishment in the eye of the slanderous world. By which rare patience and secret dissimulation, he doth not only choke the mouth of the slanderer, burying the fault with the forgetfulness of the fact, but also reclaims her to an assured honesty and faith hereafter, that erst had abused him by negligence and ill-fortune. But he which pens his wife in the highest vault of his house, or tieth a bell at her sleeve because he may hear whether she goeth, or when he takes a long journey paints a lamb of her belly, to know if she plays false in his absence—these sleights, I say, do not only deceive him that deviseth them, but also gives him for his travail the true title of cuckold. In like sort, what greater sign or argument can a man give of his own folly, than to believe that to be true, which is but doubtful, and yielding rashly to the resolution and sentence of his own conceits, thinks his wife as light of the sear and apt to deceive him, as he is ready to admit sinister suspicion ; which proceeds but of an imperfection in himself, judging the disposition of another by his own complexion.

Which was one of the greatest faults in this valiant Albanian ; who, fearing even now that which he need not to doubt, began to stand in awe of his own shadow, persuading himself that his wife was no less liberal of her love towards others than to him, and that the benefit of her beauty was as common to strangers as to himself. Albeit, the good lady,

espying well enough the grief of her husband, was not idle, for her part, to study the means to please him, and also to frame her life in such wise everyway, that her chaste and discreet government towards him might not only remove the veil of his late suspicion, but also take away the thick mist of frantic jealousy, that put him in such disquiet and made him so far exceed the limits and bonds of discretion. Albeit, her honest endeavour herein received a contrary effect; and as one born under a crabbed constellation, or ordained rather to bear the malice of a frowned destiny, she could not devise a remedy for his disease nor any herb to purge his suspicious humour; but the more she sought to prefer a show of sincerity and honesty of life, the more grew the fury and rage of his perverse fancy, thinking the company and fellowship of his wife to be as indifferent to others as peculiar to himself.

What life were like to the married man's state, or pleasures semblable to the joys of the bed, if either the one or the other might be dispensed withal from the fury of frantic jealousy? Or amongst a thousand inconveniences which only the married man doth find, what greater mischief may be more for the dissolution of the mutual tranquillity of them both, than where the one loves unfeignedly, and the other is doubtful without cause? But the ease and quiet of men are of so small a moment, and their common pleasures so interlarded with an ordinary mishap, that there is as small hold of the one, slipping away with the shortness of time, as undoubted assurance to have the other a common guest, and haunt us in all our doings, not leaving us till he had seen us laid in the pit and long bed of rest.

Whereof I have here presented you a little proof in the picture and person of this silly Albanian; who, beginning, as you have heard, to enter into some terms of jealousy with his wife—with whom, notwithstanding, he had consumed certain months in such pleasure as marriage doth allow—began to grow more fervent in that fury than either his cause did require or wisdom ought to suffer. Wherewith, setting abroach the vesssel of that poison, he forgat not for his first endeavour to dog the doings of his wife with secret spies in every corner, to abridge her liberty in going abroad, and bar the access of any to come to her; keeping, notwithstanding, no less watch and ward about her chamber than the good soldier upon his trench, or circumspect captain upon the walls

of his fortress: which brought the silly lady into such sorrow, that the state of the caitiff and slave of the galley, bound to his oar with a chain of unreasonable bigness, or he that by hard sentence of the law doth lie miserably at the bottom of a prison all the days of his life, seemed of more easy regard than the hard condition of her present state. Albeit, true virtue hath such operation and effect of herself, that how grievously soever the world doth persecute her, or seek to crucify her with the malice of men, yet can they not so keep her under by any force they can devise, but certain streams and sparks will burst out now and then, and show herself at last, as she is able to withstand the violence of any mortal affliction.

Whereof an effect appears here in the sequel of this Greek lady; who, noting the disposition of her husband, overcharged with a mad humour of wrong conceits, gave judgment immediately of his disease, and being not able utterly to expulse his new fever, studied by her endeavour to infer a moderation of his passion. Wherein, for her part, she forgat not to make patience her chiefest defence against the foolish assaults of his wilful follies; not only requiting his extraordinary rage and fits of fury with a dutiful humility and obedience of a wife, but also ceased not to love him no less than her honour and duty bound her thereunto; hoping with the assistance of some convenient time, and her discreet behaviour towards him, both to take away the disease and mortify the cause of his evil. She seemed neither to reprehend his fault openly, nor with other terms than argued her great humility; and for herself, how evil soever he entreated her, she gave an outward show of thankful contentment. And when it was his pleasure to shut her close in a chamber, as a bird in the cage, she refused not his sentence, but, embracing the gift of her present fortune, took such consolation as the hard condition of her case would admit; giving God thanks for His visitation, and craving with like intercession to have her husband restored to the use of his former wits.

Albeit, all these dutiful shows of obedience, and patient digesting of his unnatural discourtesies, together with a rare and ready disposition in her to frame herself wholly to the appetite of his will, prevailed no more to enlarge her liberty, or redeem her from the servile yoke of close imprisonment, than to reclaim his haggard mind to the understanding of reason, or restore the trance of his frantic humour; raging the more,

as it seemed, by the incredible constancy he noted in this mirror of modesty, obedience, wisdom, and chastity. Whose example in them all deserves certainly to be graven in pillars of eternity, and hung up in tables of gold, in every palace and place of estate, to the end that you ladies of our time may learn by imitation of her order and government, to attain to the like perfection of virtue: which she left as a special pattern to you all; to the end also, that if any of you, by like misfortune, do fall into the danger of semblable accidents, you may learn here the order of your government in the like affairs, and also to suppress the rage of jealousy, rather by virtue than force; which commonly is the foundation of scandal and slander, divorcement and violation of marriage, whereupon doth consequently ensue civil dissensions, and utter subversion of houses of antiquity. But now to the place of our history.

This frantic Albanian and jealous captain—being one of the train of the Lord James Trivulzio, a great favourite of the faction of Ghibellino in Italy, and at that time governor of the duchy of Milan, under the French King Louis, the third of that name—whether it were to make a further proof of the patience of his wife, or by absence to mortify and forget his fond opinion conceived without cause, retired upon a sudden to Neuchâtel, the court and ordinary place of abode of the said Lord Trivulzio. Which, albeit, was of hard digestion to the lady for a time, yet, being not unacquainted with such chances, and no prentice in the practice of her husband, she retired to her ancient patience and contentment by force, dissembling with a new grief and secret sorrow this new discourtesy to the end that her waspish husband should take no exceptions to her in any respect, but find her in this as the former storms, bent wholly to obey the appetite of his will, and not to mislike with that he finds necessary to be done.

This Trivulzio had not spent many months in France, but there was commenced information against him to the king, that he was revolted from the French and become friend to the Switzers, and sworn to their seigniory and faction. Wherewith, immediately, Fame (the common carrier of tales) filled all ears of Milan and the province thereabout with this further addition, that the king for that cause had sent him headless to the grave. Albeit as Fame is rather a

messenger of lies than a treasure of truth, and rather to be heard than to be believed, so this bruit, being not true in the last, did import a certain credit in the first; for Trivulzio, not liking to live in the displeasure of his prince, abandoned his charge and came into Lombardy, where, being summoned by the messenger of death, he gave place to nature and died; who, being the only master and maintainer of the Albanian captain, whilst he lived, could not easily be forgotten of him after his death.

For after his departure was past the general doubt of the people and each voice resolved that he was laid in his grave, Don Capitaino Spado, resolved wholly into tears, seemed here to pass the mystery of a new trance; which, with the fresh remembrance of his ancient harm, and green wound of unworthy jealousy, bleeding yet in his mind, brought him in that case, that he neither desired to live nor doubted to die, and yet in despair of them both. His solace of the day was converted into tears, and the hours of the night went away in visions and hollow dreams. He loathed the company of his friends, and hated the things that should sustain nature. Neither was he contented with the present, nor cared for the chance of future time. Which sudden alteration in strange manner drave his careful wife into no less astonishment than she had cause. And being ignorant of the occasion, she was also void of consolation; which doubled her grief, till time opened her at last a means to communicate familiarly with him in this sort:

"Alas! sir," saith she, "to what end serve these pining conceits, forcing a general debility through all your parts? Or why do you languish in grief, without discovering the cause of your sorrow to such as hold your health no less dear than the sweet and pleasant taste of their own life? From whence comes this often change of complexion, accompanied with disposition to melancholic dumps, arguing your inward and fretting care of mind? Why stay you not in time the source of your scorching sighs, that have alreay drained your body of his wholesome humours appointed by nature to give suck to the entrails and inward parts of you? And to what end serveth this whole river of tears, flowing by such abundance from your watery eyes almost worn away with weeping? Is your grief grown great by continuance of time, or have you conceived some mislike anew? If your house be out of order

in any sort, or that want of duty or diligence in me procureth your grudge, declare the cause, to the end the fault may be reformed in me, and you restored to your ancient order of quiet, and we both enjoy a mutual tranquillity as appertaineth."

But he that laboured of another disease than is incident commonly to men of good government, absolved her of all faults, or other mislikes he found in the state of his house, or other his affairs committed to her order, and less lack of her diligence to make declaration of her duty to the uttermost. "But alas!" saith he (with a deep sigh derived of the fretting dolour of his mind, and doubled twice or thrice within his stomach afore he could utter it), "what cause of comfort or consolation hath he to live in this world, from whom the malice of destiny hath taken the chiefest pillar of his life? Or to what end serveth the fruition or interest of longer years in the vale of unquietness, where the body abhorreth already the long day of his abode here? Or why should not this *soma*, or mass of corruption, which I received of the world, be dismissed to earth, and my soul have leave to pass into the other world, to shun this double passion of present torment which I feel by the death of my dear friend? Ah! my dear lady and loyal wife, my grief is so great that I die to tell you the cause, and yet the very remembrance presents me with treble torments. Wherein, I must confess unto you, that since the death of the late Lord James Trivulzio, I have had so little desire to live, that all my felicity is in thinking to die, neither can there be anything in the world more acceptable to me than death; whose hour and time, if they were as certain as himself is most sure to come in the end, I could somewhat satisfy the great desire I have to die, and moderate the rage of my passion in thinking of the shortness of the doom that should give end to my dying ghost and unruly sorrows together. Besides, weighing the infinite miseries of our time (accompanying us even from the womb of conception) with the rest and repose which dead men do find, and knowing withal how much I am in the debt of him that is dead, I cannot wish a more acceptable thing than the speedy approach and end of my days, to the end that, being denied the view of his presence here, I may follow him in the other world; where, participating indifferently such good and evil as falleth to his share, I may witness with what dutiful zeal

and affectioned heart I sought to honour and serve him in all respects."

But the lady, that saw as far into the disease of her husband as his physician into his urine, knowing well enough that he did not languish so much for the desire of him that was dead as the ticklish humour of jealousy troubled him, was content to admit his colours (how fine soever they were), as well to prefer her duty to the uttermost, as also to avoid imputation or cause of suspicion on her part. Wherewith, entering into terms of persuasion, she added also this kind of consolation following :

" More do I grieve, sir," saith she, " with the small care you seem to take of yourself than the terms of your disease do trouble me, considering the same proceeds of so slender occasion, that the very remembrance of so great an oversight ought to remove the force and cause of your accident. Admit your grief were great indeed, and your disease of no less importance, yet ought you so to bridle this wilful rage and desire to die, that, in eschewing to prevent the will and set hour of the Lord, you seek not to further your fatal end by using unnatural force against yourself, making your beastly will the bloody sacrifice of your body ; whereby you shall be sure to leave to the remainder of your house a crown of infamy in the judgment of the world to come, and put your soul in hazard of grace afore the Throne of justice above. You know, sir, I am sure, that in this transitory and painful pilgrimage there is nothing more certain than death, whom, albeit, we are forbidden to fear, yet ought we to make a certain account of his coming : neither is it any other thing (according to the Scripture) than the minister and messenger of God, executing His infallible will upon us wretches, sparing neither age, condition, nor state. It is he that gives end to our misery here, and safe conduct to pass into the other world. And as soon as we have taken possession of the house of rest, he shutteth the gates of all annoy against us, feeding us, as it were, with a sweet slumber or pleasant sleep, until the last summons of general resurrection. So that, sir, methinks, they are of the happy sort, whom the great God vouchsafeth to call to His kingdom, exchanging the toils and manifold cares incident to the creatures of this world, with the pleasures of His paradise and place of repose that never hath end.

" And touching your devotion to him that was dead,

with vain desire to visit his ghost in the other world, persuading the same to proceed of a debt and dutiful desire that you have yet to make a further declaration of your unfeigned mind towards him, I assure you, sir, I am more sorry to see you subject to so great a folly than I fear or expect the effect of your dream, for as it seems but a riddle, proceeding of the vehemency of your sickness, so I hope you will direct the sequel by sage advice, converting the circumstance into air, without further remembrance of so foolish a matter. Wherein also I hope you will suffer the words of the Scripture to direct you; which, allowing small ceremonies to the dead, forbids us to yield any debt or duty at all to such as be already passed out of the world, and much less to sacrifice ourselves for their sakes upon their tombs (according to the superstitious order of the barbarians in old time, remaining at this day in no less use among the people of the west world), but rather to have their virtues in due veneration, and treading in the steps of their examples, to imitate their order with like integrity of life.

"And for my part," saith she, dyeing her garments with the drops of her watery eyes, "proving too late what it is to lose a husband, and to forget him whom both the law of God and nature hath given me as a second part of myself, to live with mutual contentment until the dissolution of our sacred bond by the heavy hand of God, am thus far resolved in myself, protesting to perform no less by Him that liveth, that if the fury of your passion prevail above your resistance, or your disease grow to such extreme terms that will not be otherways answered but that you must yield to his summons and die, I will not live to lament the loss of my second husband, nor use other dole in the funeral of your corpse, than to accompany it to the grave in a sheet or shroud of like attire. For your eyes shall no sooner close their lids or lose the light of this world, than these hands shall be ready to perform the effect of my promise; and the bell that giveth warning of your last hour shall not cease his doleful knell, till he have published with like sound the semblable end of your dear and loving wife."

Whose simple and frank offer here (opening a most convenient occasion for her wilful husband to disclose the true cause of his disease) prevailed so much over his doubtful and wavering mind, that, dismissing even then his former

dissimulation, he embraced her, not without such abundance of tears and unruly sighs, that for a time they took away the use of his tongue. Albeit, being delivered of his trance, and restored to the benefit of his speech, he disclosed unto her the true cause and circumstance of his grief in this sort :

" Albeit, since the time of my sickness," saith he, " you have seen what distress and desolation have passed me, with fits of strange and diverse disposition, marvelling no less, I am sure, from what fountain have flowed the symptoms of so rare a passion, wherein also your continual presence and view of my weak state is sufficiently able to record the whole discourse of my disease, yet are you neither partaker of my pain, nor privy to the principal causes of so strange an evil. Neither have I been so hardy to discover them unto you, because I have been hitherto doubtful of that whereof your last words have fully absolved me. And now, being weakened with the weariness of time and sickness, in such sort as nature hath rid her hands of me and given me over to the order of death—who is to spare me no longer but to utter these last words unto you—I account it a special felicity in my hard fortune, that in the opening of the true causes of my grief, I may close and seal up the last and extreme term of my life. And because I will clear in few words the mystery which seems to amaze you, you shall note that there be three only ministers and occasions of my disease ; whereof the first (and of least importance) is for the death of my late lord and master, Don James Trivulzio, whereof you are not ignorant ; the second (exceeding the first in greatness of grief and force against me) is to think that the rigour of my destinies, and violence of sickness, yielding me into the hands of death, will dissolve and break by that means the league of long and loyal love which from the beginning my heart hath vowed unto you ; but the third and last (of a more strange quality than either of the rest) is to think that when I am dead, and by time worn out of your mind, another shall enjoy the sweet and pleasant benefit of that divine beauty of yours, which ought to serve but for the diet of the gods, the simple view whereof seems able (if it were possible) to make me suffer the martyrdom of two deaths."

Whereupon she replied with persuasions to drive him from his fond device, proffering herself eftsoons to die for company, wherein (calling the majesty of the Highest to

witness) she protested again that, if he would not be reclaimed from his desire to die within a very short moment of time, she would be as ready to yield death his tribute as he. All which she inferred, I think, rather to feed the time, than of intent to perform the effect of her offer, having the like opinion of her husband, whom she thought always to have such power to repress the evil spirit that possessed him, that he would not become the unnatural murderer of himself, and much less execute the like rage on her.

But alas! the unfortunate lady brewed here the broth of her own bane, and spun the thread of her own destruction. For falling now unhappily into the malice of her destiny, thinking nothing less than of the secret ambush of mortal treason her husband had laid for her, she went unhappily to bed with him the same night; where, for his part (preferring in his face a show of feigned contentment and consolation to the eye), he forced a further quiet of mind by the joy he imagined in the act he meant to do, but chiefly for that he had devised how the innocent lady, through the rage of his villainy, should be forced to an effect of her promise.

For the speedy execution whereof, they had not been long in bed together, but he rose from her, feigning a desire to perform the necessity of nature in the closet or chamber of secrets; his errand indeed being to fetch his dagger, which (without making her privy) he conveyed under the bolster of his bed, beginning even then to prefer a preamble afore the part he meant to play. For, falling from his former complaints of sickness, he retired into terms of extreme frenzy and madness, braying out such groans and sighs of hideous disposition, with howling, crying and foaming at the mouth, like one possessed with an evil spirit, that who had seen his often change of colour and complexion in his face, his ghastly regards arguing intents of desperation, and his eyes, flaming with fury, sunk into his head, with the order of his passion everyway, might easily have judged the desire of his heart to be of no small importance, and the thing he went about neither common nor commendable. Wherein he was assisted with three enemies of diverse dispositions: love, jealousy, and death: the last of which is sufficient of himself to make a man chafe in his harness, and take away the courage of his heart in the midst of the combat. For the one presented a certain fear by reason of the horror of the act; the other

sued, as it were, for an abstinence, or at least a moderation, of the cruelty he had commenced against his innocent wife; but the third, being the beginner of all, and exceeding the rest in power, would not dismiss him from the stage till he had played the uttermost act of his malicious tragedy.

Mark here, good ladies, the desolation of this unfortunate gentlewoman, and dispose yourself to tears on the behalf of her distress. Wherein, certainly, you have no less reason to help to bewail her wretched chance, than just occasion to join in general exclamation against the detestable acts of her tyrannous husband; who, disclaiming even now his former state and condition of a man, retires into the habit of a monster and cruel enemy to nature; and in converting the virtue of his former love, and remembrance of the sundry pleasures he had heretofore received of his dear and loving wife, into present rage and unnatural fury (far exceeding the savage and brutish manner of the tiger, lion, or leopard, bred in the deserts of Africa, the common nurse of monsters and creatures cruel without reason) whetting his teeth for the terrible suggestion of the devil, who at the instant put into his hand the dagger; wherewith, after he had embraced and kissed her, in such sort as Judas kissed our Lord the same night he betrayed him, he saluted her with ten or twelve estockados, one in the neck of another in divers parts of her body, renewing the conflict with no less number of blows in her head and arms; and because no part should escape free from the stroke of his malice, he visited her white and tender legs, with no less rage and fury than the rest.

Wherewith, beholding in her diverse undoubted arguments of death, he began the like war with himself, using the same means and ministers with his own hand, imbrued yet with the blood of his innocent wife; showing (notwithstanding this horrible part and act of despair) diverse and sundry signs of special gladness and pleasure in his face, wherein he continued till the last and extreme gasp of life—chiefly for that he saw him accompanied to death with her whom he was not able to leave behind him alive, and who, being overcharged (as you have heard) with the number of wounds, the violence whereof prevailing far above the resistance of life—did press her so much with the hasty approach of death, that the want of breath abridged her secret shrift and confession to God, with less leisure to yield her innocent soul (with humble

prayer) into the hands of her Redeemer, and commend the forgiveness of her sins to the benefit of His mercy.

Only had she respite (with great ado to speak) to give order that her body might be laid in the tomb of her first husband, Seigneur Barzo. But the cursed and execrable Albanian (so wholly possessed of the devil that the gift of grace was denied him) abhorred to the last minute of his life the remembrance of repentance ; for, laughing, as it were, at the foulness of the fact even until life left him senseless and void of breath, he commended his carcase to the greedy jaws of ravenous wolves, serving also as a fit prey for the venomous serpents and other creeping worms of the earth, and his soul to the reprobate society of Judas and Cain, with other of the infernal crew.

The worthy end of this wicked wretch argueth the just reward of the evil disposed and such as are unhappily dropped out of the favour of God, the ordinary success of those enterprises that are begun without the consent of wisdom or reason, but chiefly the effects and fortune of such as (blinded with the veil of their own will and dimmed with the mist of folly) do repose so much for themselves in the opinion of their own wit, that, detesting good counsel and advice of the wise, they do credit only the conceit of their own fancy, which, as a blind guide, doth lead them into infinite miseries and labyrinth of endless annoy, where there is no dispense of their folly, but loss of liberty, perpetual infamy, and sometime punishment by untimely death. Which, as they be worthy rewards for such as dote so much in their own wisdom that they account the same able of itself to comprehend the whole globe, or compass the world ; so the wise man, afore he entereth into any enterprise of weight (being careful for the convey of the same), doth not only compare the end with the beginning, and cast the sequel and circumstance everyway, but also, entering, as it were, into himself, he makes a view of that which is in him ; and for his better assistance, he will not refuse the advice of his friends, by which means he is sure to reap the reward of his travail with treble contentment, and seldom is he punished with too late a repentance.

Herewith, also, the example of the wise mariner doth in like sort advise us ; who, coming by fortune or violence of weather upon an unknown coast, doth straightway sound and try the depth of the river by his plummet and line, neither

will he let fall his anchor unless he be sure of the firmness of the ground ; which, if it do fail him, yet is he to withstand the malice of danger by keeping the channel which yields him water enough : so, if this wretched Albanian had made a view of himself and his forces, afore he became subject to the humour of jealous suspicion, or if he had given correction to his fault in time, and suffered reason to suppress the rage of his folly afore he was grown to terms of madness, he had enjoyed his lady at pleasure, lived yet in quiet, and prevented the foul note of infamy, wherewith the gates and posterns of his house will be painted till the extreme date of the world ; and eschewed the peril of damnable despair in killing himself, with like violation and bloody slaughter of his innocent lady.

Whose death, with the strangeness in execution, being once known to the multitude, it is to be wondered what general dole and desolation were in all parts of the city, how all estates and degrees of people spared no sorts of tears nor other dolorous tunes ; bewailing her misfortune, with several grudges at the malice of her destinies, that in such cruel manner took from amongst them the person of her whose virtues and other ornaments of God and nature served as a special mirror or looking-glass to all ages. Wherein, certainly, they had great reason ; for a lady or gentlewoman equal with her in conversation everyway—I mean chaste without argument of dishonesty, devout and yet hating superstition, bountiful without wasteful prodigality, wise without vain vaunting, so obedient towards her husband as was necessary, and lastly lacking the furniture of no good virtue—cannot be too much honoured in her life, nor worthily renowned after her death ; as well for that such rare gifts are no less meritorious for the virtues that be in them, than that they serve as special allurements to provoke young ladies and gentlewomen—desirous of like glory—to imitate the example and virtues of them whose due fame is able to exceed the length of time and live after death ; who hath no power but over our corrupt *soma*, or mass of flesh, being barred to meddle with the felicity of the mind, to whom only the title of perpetuity is due without exception.

And as her life and death import several virtues, and deserve semblable commendation (the one, for that she never made show of mislike, what wrong soever he wrought her ; the other, in that she failed not to honour him till the last

hour of his life), so may you also discern therein two several examples: the one, to warn the light and harebrained husbands not easily, or for small occasions, to enter into suspicion with their wives, whom they ought to love and honour no less than themselves; the other, to present unto the ladies of our time the due reward of wisdom, obedience, and chastity, which be the things that make this Greek live after her death, being worthily invested with the wreaths of honour among all the ladies of that country.

FIFTH TALE

THE LOVERS OF MILAN

THE ARGUMENT

BECAUSE I have already in diverse places sufficiently deciphered the forces of love, and what effects he exposeth, having once brewed the cup of the pleasant poison of our sensual appetite —whereon whosoever sippeth, swalloweth justly the reward of such follies—I may the rather be dispensed withal eftsoons to reiterate in this place that which erst hath been inferred touching the awe which that passion hath over the hearts of those whose destiny yields them subject to so great an evil. Being bold withal to note as a principle or rule of generality, that that infection proceeds rather of the corruption of our own nature than of the perfection of the same. Albeit some vain philosophers are not ashamed to avouch his beginning of the most perfect parts that are in the spirit of man ; wherein I see neither authority to allow their saying, nor reason to confirm their opinion, unless they will make it meritorious for the indiscretion and follies which appear in them that participate with such passion. For a familiar testimony whereof I have preferred this history following, not only affirming my former protestation touching the disordinate effects of love, but also to justify the opinion of him who makes no difference between the device of love and raging fits of frenzy or one possessed with a wicked spirit. For here you may see a gentleman of Milan, to enjoy a presence and pleasure of his lady, refuseth not to commit himself to manifold dangers, with diverse perilous encounters ; whereof the one seemed no less mortal than the other, and everyone threatening the end of his life by present murder. Albeit, his felicity defended him from harm, and the peril passed makes him dread a future plunge.

Not long after Maximilian's force, by the guide of evil fortune and want of good government in himself, had lost the state and seigniory of Milan, there happened no less desolation

to the unhappy faction of the Ghibellines ; when the power and policy of the great Trivulzio did not only abandon their natural soil and place of abode, driving them from the possession of their worldly portions, but also persecuted their wretched state with such cruelty, that they were ready to yield to the summons of despair, if it had not been for a simple proffer of a certain hope they reposed in the assistance of the Emperor Maximilian. Who, more willing than able to restore their desolation, pursued the revenge of their wrong with a puissant army even until the walls and gates of Milan ; where he received such hot repulses by the valiant encounters of Charles, Duke of Bourbon (then viceroy or deputy to the French king), that, painting the gates with the blood of his captains, and leaving the dead bodies of his people in witness of his being there, the majesty returned with more commendation for his good meaning than fame or glory of the victory, leaving the miserable Stradiotes—bathed in the tears of their second sorrow—to the guide and government of their Fortune.

Who seemed at last to enter into such compassion of their misery, that she restored the greatest part not only to the liberty of their country and society of former habitation, but also to the use of their goods and revenues usurped by the enemy. The rest she divided into diverse corners of Christendom. Some went to Trent, and were sworn the subjects of Francis Sforza, Duke of Bari : others found place of abode in the kingdom of Naples. To some she gave passport to attempt the devotion of the holy Vicar of Rome ; and the rest repaired to Mantua. Amongst which crew or last company was one Cornelio (upon whom this history maketh his chiefest discourse), whom, albeit Fortune had made partaker of her malice amongst the rest of his countrymen, yet his mind, grudging with the injury of fate, lost nothing of her entire and virtue. For notwithstanding he was of the race of the Sforzians, and chiefest enemy to the usurped government and proud behaviour of the Frenchmen within Milan, and that he had left amongst them his inheritance and goods to confiscation, yet he was assisted with so fine a policy and great endeavour of his mother, that he had sufficient exhibition to maintain his ancient port and calling.

And as the stately view and feature of his complexion and limbs presented a special cunning of nature, lacking

besides no gift or quality due to a gentleman, and pestered, withal, with no more years than were convenient for the decoration of so seemly a beauty ; so, being the chief courtier that haunted the company of ladies, and no less welcome amongst the lofty dames of Milan afore the subversion of their society by the cruelty of the Frenchmen, he made a choice of one from amongst the rest, whom he failed not to court with a continual proffer of his service, and other offices of humanity prescribed in the school of love, until he thought himself sufficiently rampired in the entrails of her heart, and left her no less willing to yield a participation of affection than himself passioned with desire to pursue the quest and conquer her beauty. Her name was Plaudina, equal to him in the height of estate, and nothing inferior in the golden gifts and ornaments of nature. And albeit she had newly made a proof of the married man's pastime, and offered the flower and first-fruits of her virginity upon the altar of wedlock ; yet the youngness of her years (defending her beauty from all arguments of alteration or change) would not suffer the hot and often encounters of her husband to impair anyway the gloss or precious dye of so rare a perfection.

Wherein as she was noted the odd paragon of Italy, as well for that respect as other ornaments of majesty incident to honour, so the commendation of these virtues seemed not so fit an instrument to advance her fame and glory, as present means to procure treble passion to the new disquiet of Cornelio ; who grieved not so much with the sentence of adversity, as cried out of the law of nature and malice of his present fortune ; for that the one had given him a heart to love and liberty to choose, and the other, being his guide in the toil and travail of his suit, took him away when he attended to reap the fruits of his harvest. But that which brought more oil to his match, and kindled the coals of fresh disquiet, was that, albeit he knew himself to be reciprocally loved, or at least near the good-will of his lady, yet was he void of means and ministers to solicit his cause, or bewray that which he durst not discover other than the amorous regards and glances of the eye, with certain sighs and secret wringing of the hand, and kisses gotten by stealth in corners. Which albeit argued a likelihood and sympathy of affection, imparting an equality of desire to the hearts of them both, yet the one being afraid to give the charge, and the other ashamed to

resign without an alarum, seemed both plunged indifferently in a passion of doubt and fear, until love (whose affairs cannot well be dispatched without the assistance of a third), quarrelling with the simplicity of Cornelio, presented him with a messenger convenient for the convey of their business.

For there was a poor swain, sometime serving as a drudge to the mother of Cornelio, and now preferred to his Lady Plaudina in the room of her waggoner or coach-driver, whose office as it was always to go by the door of her coach when her pleasure was to visit places of solace and take open air in the fields, so, reposing much for himself in the fidelity of this slave (thinking to enjoin a greater credit to the authority of his small office), he admitted him in his heart the aptest colcarrier between him and his lady. Wherefore, after he had conjured him by fear and fair promises to avow his diligence to the uttermost, with no less secrecy than wisdom, and convenient expedition at all times, he made a first proof of his policy and fine convey of his charge, in the delivery of a letter which he willed him to present unto Plaudina ; the inward affection and disposition of whose heart, as he measured by the messages of her eyes, so he preferred his service and boarded her good-will with these terms :

" If it were not, good madam, that every state and condition of man were subject to his peculiar disaster, and that the noble heart, made of a delicate metal, is more full of affections, and apt to incline to the lore of love, than the rest of the rude and barbarous people, I would think that the passion which pincheth such as do love, were a scourge and due correction sent from above, for a chastisement of their lofty and wanton imaginations. But seeing it is most sure that nature hath put a certain difference between the dispositions of her creatures, with a desire to pursue the summons of her instigation according to the privilege of their degree, it is not in our power to disclaim the instructions of such a guide, nor degenerate from the instinct of that destiny given us in our conception. Wherein, as the noble mind, loathing the enterprise of base or vile condition, delights in such conquest as yield most fame or commendation, so you ought not to marvel if the glimmering beams of your rare beauty painted by divine art in the forefront of your face, the adoration which all men yield to your singular virtues, with other

seemly perfections and gifts of majesty given you by the heavens for a dowry above the rest, have made me strike sail of my former liberty, with frank resignation of my heart and dearest part in me to the disposition of your mercy. Neither have I any cause at all to mislike the sentence of my fate, or grudge with the lot of my present choice, if the respect of my unfeigned love and sincere loyalty may move you to pay the tribute of my service with an assurance of semblable affection. Wherein, because both danger and distance of our abodes, denying the tongue to do his office, barreth us also to use the benefit of mutual conference, I humbly crave, good madam, an absolute resolution, by our letters, of that which the secret signs and messengers of love do not only put me in hope, but import a warranty of the conquest of your good-will. Wherein, if I may be assisted with the goodness of the heavens, and consent of Fortune, so far forth as the same may make me meritorious of your favour, and that the merit of my service may be measured with a grant of your good-will, there shall no peril withstand the proffer of my life to do you pleasure, nor any occasion or chance, whether it be accidental or proper, have power to break the vow which my heart hath already sworn to die and live in the service and contemplation of your beauty. Neither shall any lady in this corner of the world have more cause to joy in the choice of her servant than the paragon Plaudina; whose hand I kiss with great humility, and honour the remembrance of her name with no less sincerity, being absent, than desirous to yield my homage with due adoration to the presence of so fair a creature.—Yours, more than his own,

CORNELIO."

The lady being darted afore with the desire of Cornelio (and would gladly have entered the lists and given the onset, if it had not been for the respect of her honour) was now so wounded to the quick, that she fell into terms of commendation of her chance, blessing the goodness of her fortune, that had not only planted her affection in so high a place, but (yielding her reward with semblable glee) hath made her the mistress of him whom her heart had already chosen and admitted into undoubted favour, which she confirmed eftsoons with such terms of gratulation and arguments of present gladness, that, if the remorse of shame and reputation of her honour

had not been impediments to the desire of her heart, closing her mouth against the present conceits of joy in this new society, she had immediately dismissed the messenger with absolute assurance to perform the request of him that sent him. Whereof, albeit shame seemed to abridge the expedition, and offer causes of stay for the time, yet, wanting force to mortify altogether the humour of raging desire, she was driven to give place to the provocation of love, who divesting her of honest shamefastness, which ought to be the chief habit and decoration of the beauty of great ladies, willed her to defer no longer the thing she had already vowed ; and seeing the injury of present time denied her to satisfy him as she would, at least to yield him such contentment as she may. Wherefore taking pen, ink and paper, she replied to his letter with this answer :

" The circumstance of your present letter, sir, seems to argue an exception against the friendly looks and glances of mine eyes. Wherein, albeit I could note a great simplicity and want of discretion in him that construeth the regards of a lady—cast at unawares—to the commodity of himself, in winning the good-will of her that meaneth nothing less than to make them the ministers of love, yet, being more ready to content you therein than curious of mine own behaviour, I am to acquit you of imputation that way, and convert the note of that folly to the oversight of myself. And albeit the pleasant encounter of mine eyes, seeming more liberal on your behalf, with a familiarity more than ordinary to all men, may persuade a certain difference I have put between the friendship of you and respect of any other, with desire to embrace you above any one creature ; yet was I of opinion that your sundry virtues and reputation of honour would not suffer you to challenge me for the first fault, or to convert these regards of simple and cold favour into such consequence, as to attempt the violation of that which mine honour grudgeth to lose, and the vow of faith to my husband forbids me to depart withal. Notwithstanding, I yield you no less thanks for your courtesy than you seem to give commendation to my beauty and other gifts you note in me, accounting the same of greater price, by the value and estimation you make of them. Neither will I refuse the proffer of your present friendship, which, as I hope, is void of intent to prejudice mine honour. So let

it suffice you that I am not only contented to admit you into favour, but also determined to hold you no less dear than the tenderest part of myself. And because letters (being incident to many casualties) are commonly the first disclosers of the secrets of lovers, my advice is that henceforth you stay not only the diligence of your pen in sealing such great importance within a dissembling piece of paper, but also be contented to commit the whole convey of our business to the credit of this bringer; who is to yield you salutation of the behalf of her who, joying no less in the unity of this friendship, than hating the thing that may seem hurtful to the consummation of the same, doth wish your constancy of no longer continuance than you shall find cause of credit in the loyalty of your unfeigned PLAUDINA."

The report of this letter preferred such a possibility and likelihood of good luck to the Milanese, that, dismissing even now all arguments of former doubt, he determined to accept the offer of his fortune and pursue the benefit of present time. Wherein he was so furthered by the diligence of the minister and messenger of their love, that there seemed to want, for the final complot of their business, but only the consent of convenient time and place: which had followed accordingly, if, for the more assurance of the bargain, they had bribed the good-will of the blind goddess; whom, as the poets have christened by the name of Dame Fortune, giving her charge over the change and alteration of things, so she is not so inconstant of herself, as ready to manifest her mutability when the wretches of the world seem to repose most assurance in her friendship. And as the pleasant apple, mustering with delicate glee upon the height of the highest sprays, is blown down with the least puff of wind that breathes, and so oppressed with the violence of the fall, that the fruit is quite taken away in the midst of his glory; so the ease and quiet of man is favoured with so small a moment of time, and subject to so many changes, that we ought neither esteem, so greatly as we do, the tickle pleasures of so small abode, nor judge assurance in such uncertain vanities. Seeing, withal, the same is of such malicious disposition, that when we have laid the foundation of our pleasure and prosperity, with full persuasion to enjoy our quiet without controlment, it is then that Fortune discovereth her ambush, and invading us, at unawares, with

the fury of her malice, payeth our former pleasure with an interest of treble desolation, that faileth not to attend us even until our fatal day of repose.

Whereof you may note a familiar proof in the sequel of this Cornelio, who, being upon the point to taste of the delicate fruits in love, and embrace his lady with such contentment as lovers do commonly wish and seldom encounter, behold! the malice of the Frenchmen began to rage with such extremity against the lineage of the Sforzians (whereof he was one of the chiefest) that he was driven to avoid the present danger of his life with a sudden flight and secret stealing out of the town. Wherein he was so hotly pursued with the extremity of his peril, that being barred any leisure to communicate with his dearest friends, and less time to impart his mishap to his lady, or once salute her with a simple farewell: which seemed not so grievous to himself, as of treble dolour to the sorrowful Plaudina; who, distilling no small number of tears on the behalf of the sudden departure and absence of her dear friend, and restored at last to a moderation and patience by force, began to cast the circumstance of his danger. Wherein she imagined all such doubts as either hope or fear could put in her head; sometime persuading he should be overtaken and oppressed by the way, and by and by she feared lest he were betrayed into the hands of his enemies, by the malice of such as he put in trust with his life. Wherein she was no less doubtful of the one, than in despair of the other, that she seemed no less passioned for the time, than if the enemies of her friend had cut her Cornelio in pieces afore her face.

And as she would have dismissed these tragical conceits of doubt and fear, and retired to a quiet, with expectation of better fortune, she was suddenly assailed with a second alarum in her heart, which mortifying all care of the well-doing of her absent Cornelio, preferred a vehement desire not only to recover him (wherein appeared a great impossibility), but also, wishing to be a companion of his journey, and partaker of his misery, she seemed to expose a frank offer of that which erst she was ashamed and made conscience to grant. And as she was void of all comfort in this calamity, saving that the often remembrance of her friend seemed to restore some little contentment; so, imagining that the breath of the air would carry the echo of her complaints into the ears

of him that was gone, she saluted his absence with these terms :

" All things ought to be hateful to the ears which seem hurtful to the quiet of the mind ; and yet one chief consolation we find in misery is to record the circumstances of our misfortune ; neither can that grief be of great importance, whose cause is of small moment. But alas ! what sorrow is semblable to the separation of friends ? Ah ! Cornelio, what ancient grudge procureth this new dislike, or what offence have I done of late, that makes me meritorious of this great discourtesy ? Wilt thou pay the merit of my friendship with so unthankful a tribute, and abuse the expectation which all man had of thy virtue ? Hast thou plied me to the appetite of thy will, and now determined to leave me in the greatest distress of desire to enjoy thee ? Or canst thou use so small regard to the desolate state of thy sorrowful Plaudina, as, leaving her bathed in the tears of undeserved dole, to steal away without the comfort of one simple adieu ? What needest thou have doubted to communicate with her who hath always reserved an equal care of thy safety and her own life ? And if the love thou hast vaunted to bear me had been matched with an unfeigned meaning of continuance and constancy, the fear of the enemy had not prevented thy coming to me : for love alas ! defieth the malice of danger, and peril is the thing that least troubleth the heart that is truly affectionate. What comfort in my present misery, or expectation of future redress, being out of hope eftsoons to reclaim him that received but now the sentence of continual exile ? How am I plunged in a passion of double extremity ; neither content to disclaim my affection and less able to dismiss the remembrance of him that is the cause of my woe !

" I find now (alas, too soon !) how justly we women may exclaim against nature ; who, framing us of a brickle mould, apt to yield and easy to be won, hath enjoined us withal a certain vehemency of affection, piercing the heart with desire, in such sort as, being once thoroughly coifed with love, we are not only forsaken, when we wish chiefly to embrace the object of our appetite, but are also subject to abide all sorts of revenge of the ordinary rigour of men. And what rigour or wrong have I offered thee, O Cornelio, whereof I have not felt the first apprehension ? For forcing myself

to yield thee contentment, I spared not the proffer of mine honour to purchase thy friendship, and in giving thee assurance of my good-will, I have spotted the renown of my former reputation. Whereof the blood of shame puts me in remembrance, with grudge at so great a fault; and thy conscience is my present witness of my unfeigned loyalty. Neither will the flattering lines of thy sundry letters conceal this discourtesy, nor the messenger and faithful solicitor of our love forget to reproach thee of inconstant behavour to thy loyal Plaudina; who, feeling now what it is to lack the society of him whom the heart hath chosen to love, is equally pinched with the pangs of such as, plunged in the passion of desire, do wish that they want, and lack the thing they chiefly would have; whereby they seem to nourish life with the only breath of a simple and cold hope.

"But why am I so partial on mine own behalf, in disclaiming against the discourtesy of him who peradventure deserveth not these terms of blame? Or why do I not rather respect the true cause of his departure, stirred up (as it seemeth) by the necessity of the time, forcing him to abandon his parents, country and revenue, unless he would quench the thirst of his enemies with the abundance of his blood, and appease their malice with the price of his head? Certainly the virtues and gifts of Cornelio acquit him of all arguments of inconstancy: neither can a body of so rare perfection harbour such dissembling disposition. But as the desirous heart is seldom at rest, so the doubtful mind is dreadful of deceit, and, quarrelling continually with his good hap or sinister fortune, is always in imagination what judgment to resolve upon the condition of his own estate.

"So my case is of no less perplexity; for, wafting indifferently between happy chance and evil success, I feel myself double passioned, sometime moved to rejoice my good hap, in being loved of so honest, courteous, and noble a gentleman as Cornelio, and by and by driven to inveigh against my evil fortune, that hath put such distance and separation of our bodies when we were at point to perform the consummation of our acquaintance. And albeit the common chances of this world resemble a confection made of honey and gall, and that the banquets of love, being garnished with dishes of both sorts, will us to make choice with deliberation—alleging that the pleasure is not so great as the

repentance and penance of hard digestion—yet I think the virtue to perform the vow of the heart takes away the greatness and heinous disposition of the fault. Wherefore seeing my heart hath made his choice, and the rest of my parts resolved to perform the quest, I will not only dismiss all doubts of the assurance of his goodwill, but study to exceed him in affection; devising the means from henceforth to make him feel the force of my goodwill, with the desire I have to knit an indissoluble unity of the two minds, whose bodies are forced to live in separation by the malice of the world and angry doom of my fortune."

Here, if Plaudina inveighed only upon two points of her disaster, the one for the sudden departure of her friend, and the other for the doubt she seemed to put in the assurance of his love, it is to be thought that Cornelio had cause of treble complaint, both to be driven to save his life by cowardly flight, to steal away in such secret and silent manner, as only his guide was privy to his going, and also to be distressed with such shortness of time, that he was barred to seem thankful to his lady with a simple farewell, which was sufficient to stir up her jealous humour against him. But that which exceeded the rest in greatness of grief was that he had no man of trust to carry her news of his being, and much less durst he communicate his business with any stranger. Neither had he hope to be advertised of the occurences of Milan, nor means to make report of his own estate at Mantua; for that he durst not discover the place of his present abode there. Wherefore, crying out of the constellation and climate of his destinies, he complained of his unhappy case in this sort:

"If my offence were as great as my punishment is grievous, I would think no submission worthy of my place, nor my fault meet to be dispensed withal; or if I had as justly deserved this wrong as I am sure to suffer the smart, I had no reason to commence cause of complaint against the malice of the world, and much less accuse the iniquity of present time; nor yet cry out of the sinister disposition of Fortune; to whom as the poets seem to attribute some power over our wordly affairs (bestowing their endeavour therein, I think, rather to feed the time and imaginations of the people with a shape of figure of an inconstant creature, than with intent to persuade a credit in so senseless an image—

so I am also persuaded by the present experience of her inconstancy, that she is not so liberal to give as ready to take away, and less able to continue the felicity wherewith she seems to flatter the conceit of the simple. For whom she hath brought to believe in her, she makes many times more desirous of glory, than able to receive it.

"Wherein who may more justly exclaim against her mobility than the unhappy Cornelio; whom (being favoured with the offer of a reciprocal affection, and at the point to be put in the possession of his desire) she hath not only taken the prey out of my mouth, but committed me with cruelty into the vale of extreme desolation? Of what moment are the greatness of princes, or to what end serves honour or high calling, seeing both the one and the other are subject to confusion, and ready to yield at the least puff of wind that bloweth from a contrary shore? Yet if I were a simple citizen or companion of meaner calling, the enemy would neither watch my doings with so many eyes, nor pursue my death by public or private invasion, and I suffered to live as free from the troubles and tumults of the world, as far from any care or account of the doings of great men; where now alas! the only height of my estate, tipped with the title of honour, depriveth me of the use of my country, society of my friends, and contemplation of the thing I hold no less dear than the health of my soul. But if anything could stop the covetous humour of man, and everyone—content with the lot of his portion—would cease to invade the dominion of another, kings should sit sure in their thrones, and the palaces of princes void of suspicious fear and care. And then, mine own Plaudina, should not I live without the company of thee, and thou have cause to doubt the firm constancy of thy servant; whose reputation of honour, and faith towards his prince, denieth him for the present to honour thee with the duty which thy virtues deserve.

"And, albeit it is no less folly than time lost to travel in despite of Love and Fortune, which both have conspired my destruction, and joined in consent to keep me from enjoying the favour of her who merits the service of one more noble and worthy everyway than I; and because no distance shall dissolve my affection, nor diminish the least branch of goodwill, nor yet time herself have power to overtread the virtue of my faith—I will so dispose of the rest

of my life, as the same shall make absolute declaration of the unfeigned constancy of my mind, with the sincere vow of loyalty, which I have sworn and dedicated to the service of her divine beauty, even until the last and extreme separation of my soul and body. Wherein, because adversity is rather subject to many miseries than apt to admit any consolation, and that the goodwill of fortune comes rather at unawares than won by special suit, I will perforce content myself with the gift of present time, and, using the remembrance of my mistress as a special moderation of the hardness of my exile, so honour the image and picture of her beauty, painted already in the entrails of my heart, that the only remembrance and inward view of my dear Plaudina shall nourish the remainder of my miserable days, with no less contentment being absent than I took pleasure in the regard of her glistering eyes and the rest of her delicate proportion, at such time as my good fortune was content to give me the glee of her presence."

Wherein, albeit he spent certain time, with imagination that his lady heard the cry of his complaints, and gave judgments of his side for the assurance of his loyalty, yet he forgat not to haunt the companies of the dames of Mantua, refusing to resemble in anywise the order of those shaded lovers, who, brought up in the school of one romantic Tristan, or leading the errant and obscure life of Amadis, do fill the air full of their dolorous sighs, and seeking to record their passions in the deep and hidden caves of the earth, delight not in the place and good fellowship of good haunt ; neither are they at any time so well in quiet, as when they feel their desolate bodies shrouded under the shade of solitary places, or when, by long ranging the wilderness and desert lands, they find by chance some odd hermitage, far from the use and ordinary habitation of men, where feeding only upon the wholesomeness of the air and imagination of their own conceit, they pine away in expectation that some good angel or oracle will appear unto them with the message of good news, or else the fatal sentence of their life. As those kind of turtles or domestical fools, degenerating from the planet that governeth the inclination of true lovers (whose complexion ought not to be dimmed with the darkness of desolate places), do seem to have their conception from under the angry and crabbed constellation of Saturn, wishing willingly

that their ladies were converted into the shape of nymphs, whom the poets feign to wander and dwell in the thickest covert of the woods, to the end that none but they should enjoy the glance and view of their beauty ; so the true and loyal lover (armed with unfeigned assurance of his vow) doubts not to advance himself in the press of most repairs, thinking he can give no greater proof or declaration of his constancy to his mistress than to withstand the importunities and alarms of others.

Which you may note in this Cornelio, who, visiting the assemblies and meetings of the ladies of Mantua, was marked immediately of one of the chiefest ladies of the city, and regarded with so good an eye that falling extremely in love with the virtues and other dexterities of the banished knight, she embraced him so straightly in the entrails of her heart, that, upon the instant, she had forgot the honour and reputation of her state, with the veil of shame (which ought to seal the eyes of great ladies and correct the humour of their fond appetite) in executing the office of a shameful client, in a cause which she neither ought to have solicited, and much less condescended unto, by force of any importunities how great soever they were, if it had not been for the assistance of an old neighbour of hers ; who, understanding the disease of her mistress, promised her diligence to procure the remedy with expedition. Wherein she omitted no opportunity as occasion was given : for attending the offer of convenient time, she found the means to encounter Cornelio one morning all alone in a church, at whom she raved in this sort :

" The condition of nobility consists not so much in the title and surname of honour, as in the commendation and effect of true virtues appearing in a graft descended of so noble a stock, and the greatest thing, sir, that makes a valiant man known to the world, and preserveth the renown of his reputation in entire, is not to refuse the occasion and offer of his fortune, given him for the increase of his felicity. Neither can any man more abuse the excellent gifts and goodness of nature than to condemn the instinct and privilege which she hath given him for the decoration of his estate."

The gentleman, somewhat astonied with the sudden encounter of his neighbour, seemed to marvel no less at the rhetoric of the old *marmotte,* than muse what might be the intent of such formal protestation. Wherewith, for his

part, having no great leisure to devise for his answer, he could not reply but with terms of courtesy in this sort :

" If at unawares my tongue hath stolen a liberty, in talking the thing that hath offended the ears of you or any other, or by like oversight have done that which your disposition cannot brook nor the law of courtesy allow, with the consent of your opinion, I am rather to be pardoned by course than punished by justice. For that such offences, being common and natural, seem rather to proceed of ignorance than of the instigation of malice or corruption of the mind. Wherein as your judgment is no less equal than my innocency meritorious, so, if it will please you to reveal the chief points of my fault, you shall see the hardness of the penance, with treble satisfaction of the wrong, shall take away the foulness of the fact."

Which kinds of courteous reply liked not a little the ears of the messenger ; who, accounting him worthy to enjoy the goodwill of the greatest lady of a country, gave judgment of the victory with end of the enterprise. Wherein, notwithstanding, she was no less deceived, than shame, with the respect of her calling, ought to have closed her mouth from soliciting so bad a case. For albeit she discovered point by point the cause of her coming, with a peculiar commendation and praise of the lady that sent her (forgetting not to decipher artificially her sundry properties and many gifts of nature, but chiefly her unfeigned affection, with ready offer and conformity of that whereof law of kind makes all men not only desirous, but study to win by long suit and serviceable diligence), yet wanting force to shake the walls of so sure a fortress, her art seemed also insufficient to persuade the mind of Cornelio. Who, albeit was of opinion and knew well enough, that the wisdom was no less in accepting the offer of a good adventure than the folly of double moment to refuse the preferment of fortune, yet was he so wholly resolved in the loyal love of his lady at Milan, whose only and simple remembrance restored such a remorse of the vow which his heart had already sworn on her behalf, that he seemed more willing to embrace the last and fateful doom of his life than desirous to abuse the least point of his duty and service unto her.

And, albeit the desires we feel stir in us import no other thing than a certain mirror or looking-glass, receiving the

dark impressions which our appetites present unto us; and that they which imagine whole castles of constancy, with protestation never to faint in the vow they have made, do no other thing than give occasion to writers to beautify their histories with the circumstance of their folly, with such a blow and open mockery in the end, that they stick not to describe their vain and fond humour upon public stage in the hearing of all the world—yet am I of opinion, that as the garment that is fit for every man is well framed for no man, so the heart that is apt to decline as the appetite is ready to summon, is neither meritorious of favour in any sort, nor meet to keep place in the rank of the virtues—chiefly where he refuseth the object of his own choice. Neither is it possible that two suns give light to the world at one instant, nor once convenient for the mind of one man to embrace the image or figure of more than one saint.

Wherein the example of Cornelio, calling us to the imitation of the like virtue, serves also to confute the oppositions of certain covetous ladies nowadays; who, rather greedy of glory than able to deserve it, do not stick to whet their wits and inveigh sinisterly against the inconstancy of men, transporting the whole title and honour of true loyalty to themselves, as though there remained no spark nor show of that virtue in the hearts of men. Who, as they were the first partakers of that gift, so the constant order of their doings and lives (being found for the most part the longest in breath) do argue them no less worthy of that perfection, than able to exceed that flattering crew of flickering creatures; who, in robbing us of that which we deserve by just title, do seem to beautify themselves with the merit of other men's virtues. But because the ears of all women cannot brook the hearing of a truth, and that the pursuit of this quarrel (arguing a more danger in the adventure than gain in the victory) might set abroach the faults of some of our countrywomen, I am content to give them that they will have by force, and retiring to the place of my history, declare unto you the answer of Cornelio to the messenger:

"I am sorry," saith he, "the large honour and liberal offer which you seem to present unto me on the behalf of your lady and mistress is of a more high moment than either I am worthy to possess, or able to requite with equal merit. Wherein, because the hard condition of my present state

seems my chiefest enemy to so great a preferment, I doubt how to seem thankful to her and satisfy the time both together. Albeit as things impossible are not to be pursued, and offences forced of necessity are most meritorious of pardon, so, being not able to answer her expectation in counterchange of affection, I am only to rack the little talent that is left me to so high a pin, that only she shall dispose of my honour and life, with all that I have in the world, at her pleasure; which it may like her to use as a supply of the present duty and service she demands at my hand. Only being at this present not the master of myself, nor the use of my heart in mine own possession, my suit is that she rather blame the wrong which time offereth to us both, than note me of any disdain in refusing the friendship of her who merits more than I am able to perform. For if my heart were as free from foreign and former bonds as she deserveth to be served, and that my affections did not exceed the ordinary impressions which assail the mind of man, assure yourself she should not live long unsatisfied to her contentment, and much less have cause to enter into suspection of jealous disdain for me for returning the offer of that which may serve for a present to the greatest prince in Italy. Neither will I so much abuse the proffer of her acquaintance or cause of your coming, as either her liberal offer, or vehemency of your importunities on her behalf, shall move me to resolve a worse opinion, or more slender credit, on the honour or honesty of her that sent you; desiring you for end to prefer my excuse according to the integrity of the same, with this further addition and humble request, that she be as bold to employ me in any other respect no less amply, and so far forth as my honour and life will extend."

"More honestly," saith the messenger, "could you not refuse the offer of that which erst was never presented to any, and much less so near the point to make a price of so precious a merchandise. Neither do I think you worthy of the title of that courtesy whereof you are commended, nor yet am I of mind that your heart is capable of the noble virtue of love; seeing the renown and honour of her, whose beauty only hath the greatest princes of Italy in awe, can make no breach or enter. And who would seem of so slender judgment (unless he had quite disclaimed the order of reason) that, being proffered freely that which princes cannot

get by any suit, and not only desired but pursued with great instance, would let slip the gift of so good a fortune, and make chips of the friendship of so fair and courteous a lady? With what face dare you visit hereafter the assemblies of great dames, having committed so great a fault on the behalf of her whose goodwill you do not deserve, if her courtesy did not call you to that preferment? Are you of opinion that the merit of your beauty and other proportion exceeds the honour and height of her that wooeth you? Imagine the same to be of such force that it is able to draw ladies to dote of you even unto death, would you become so hard-hearted as to increase your glory, with the exploit of so great cruelty? If you be subject to so fond a humour, you must needs be incident to the just revenge which the god of love is ready to thunder upon such as seem to hold his lore in scornful contempt. Whereof as I have heard more examples than my skill is able to reveal in good order, being never trained in the turning over of volumes and histories; so I wish chiefly the plague of Narcissus may put you in remembrance of your present oversight, lest in disdaining the friendship of such as excel yourself everyway, you dote upon the image of your own shadow, and by that means yield treble usury to the wrong you offer her whose loyal affection deserveth a better reward than the return of a repulse of so small importance."

Wherewith, Cornelio, cutting off the rest of her waspish discourse, desired her to press him with no greater imputation than his offence deserved. "For," saith he, "in terming me unworthy of the title of courtesy, and that my heart is too hard to admit the impression of love, you rather slander me by ignorance than accuse me by justice; seeing the only force of love hath forced already a vow of my affection and heart to a lady of Milan, whose presence albeit the iniquity of fate hath taken from me for a time, yet shall the only remembrance and inward regard of her beauty and virtue suffice to minister sufficient moderation and chief comfort during the angry doom of my hard exile. Neither shall the force of any enchantment, and much less the charm of any enticing persuasion, prevail so far over me as once to make me transgress the least point of my confirmed loyalty. Wherein, as the salamander lives in the flame, so will I pine away and consume by piecemeal in the passion

of true love, till the angry fates, ceasing to wreak their malice upon me, do place me in the possession of the due meed of my merit."

Here this old enchantress (understanding the circumstance and full of his disease, and that his heart was so thoroughly limed with the beauty of his lady at Milan that it denied the impression of her offer—wherein albeit there appeared an impossibility to withdraw, or at least to procure moderation to the vehemency of his affection—yet, being no less loath to take a foil in her enterprise than desirous to perform her charge to the uttermost, with intent to return the messenger of absolute contentment or undoubted despair) thought not to leave him till she had sifted and tried every sinew and vein of his disposition. And having but one piece of rhetoric remaining, she bolked it out, under a covertly kind of reprehending his folly, in this sort:

"Are you one of that vain crew," saith she, "and arch-fools of the world, that, striving to bend the bow of loyal lovers, do make a glory of a thing as requisite in love, as cowardness or want of courage in the soldier maintaining skirmish against the enemy? Do not you think that a woman of indifferent judgment will not rather laugh at such folly in her servant than allow his fond constancy, begun without reason, and kept with so small discretion? And albeit it is glory of a lady to be only embraced and dearly beloved, and that they have (as it were by a special instinct of nature) a desire above all creatures to be the only possessors of the hearts of their lovers, do you not think, for all that, that they give not leave and liberty to their servants to make a second choice or change of mistress, to the end they may be thoroughly resolved of the loyalty of their servant, and he discern the true difference between the affections of both his ladies? And sure that heart is wrought of strange metal, and the spirit of slender capacity, that, being bound, as it were, to a task, is subject to only one simple desire, without power to bestow his regards in more places than one. Admit constancy to be as great a virtue as you make it, and that the faith in love is to be kept without violation, I pray you, in asking you one question by friendship, let me be answered by the very touch and report of your conscience.—What assurance have you of equality or semblable affection at the hands of your mistress of Milan, whom you have more reason to doubt than cause to

believe? Do you think that you are only beloved, or that being punished by exile, without great hope eftsoons to recover you, she can continue as faithful for her part, as you seem foolish in being the slave and subject of an image or shadow of a thing so far hence?

"No! No! Do away these toys of small substance, and let my experience, Seigneur Cornelio, prescribe you one chief and general rule, that no woman being once disposed to love, and having the object of her fancy taken out of her presence, is so able to repress the humour of desire, or correct the instigation of her appetite, as it is either in her power to disclaim at her pleasure, or degenerate from that wherein she hath a facility by nature; but as one spoiled of all resistance and arguments of virtue, she ceaseth not to follow the quest of her licentious inclination, till she have found fresh supply to enter the lists, and pay the arrearages of him that first conquered the place. Women be neither equal with saints nor like unto angels, neither are they made of other metal than such as is distilled of the imperfections of yourselves; and, in place of privilege or free dispense from the passions of love, I affirm them to exceed all other creatures in the vehemency of that impression, and chiefly where the effect doth not follow the assurance of the word. For as the drawing glances of the eye, and pleasant plat of the tongue, is rather an earnest penny of the bargain than a full consummation of the agreement, so the hungry appetite of the heart affected is never satisfied to his contentment, till he have tasted of the delicate fruit growing in the midst of the orchard and paradise of love; which only concludes and knits up the rest of the imperfect bargain. Wherein as I must confess unto you, that both the law of loyalty is to be observed and faith kept inviolable, where we find an unity of affection and full effect of our desire; so to bestow love in the air, and live without hope of the thing that is wished, I account it rather the part of a madman than office of one that hath his wits at commandment. Neither doth the end of such pining conceits import other consequence than a loathsome weariness and unnatural hate of life, with continual expectation to die, and an everlasting remembrance of his folly after his death. And for your part, comparing the symptoms of your present passion with the unlikelihood I see to have speedy end of your martyrdom, you bring in remembrance the miserable state of

the simple sparrow-hawk ; who, being hooded to take away her wildness, sits all the day long becking upon her jesses and whetting her beak upon the perch, rather in despair than certain of the coming of her keeper.

" Let me pierce that hard heart of yours with persuasions of reason, and seem not so rash in refusing the goodness of Fortune—who albeit is accounted an enemy to most men, yet is she also friendly to some—and imagine that once in the course of your life she kisseth your cheek, and holdeth her lap open with an offer of a good turn, which, if you refuse, is not to be reclaimed eftsoons by any art or policy. Convert your affection, founded upon such slippery substance and no less uncertain of his due meed, into a balance of equal friendship and heart of semblable honour and virtue ; and exchange at last these languishing conceits that torment your pining spirit for a pleasure no less precious than of great merit, who is no less ready than willing, and more apt to offer than you able to receive. Cease, henceforth, to love upon credit, and cry out of the shadow or figure of a thing that hath neither ears to hear your complaint nor means to relieve your distress ; and think that the glory of love consists not in the simple desire of the mind, nor in the foolish provocations of our vain conceits, but passing further, the pleasant reward and triumph of that victory consisteth in the consummation of the work ; without the which, love seemeth no other thing than a bare plate or table, whereupon the painter may draw what proportion he list ! And truly as there is no man happy in love, nor hath cause to vaunt of the victory, but he that encountereth the object of his desire ; so methinketh a man should not love that he hath not, nor desire the thing that is utterly unknown unto him. I say thus much, sir, because your resolute affection towards your lady of Milan seemeth rather to argue an humour of frenzy than virtue in love, and vain opinion than true effect ; advising you for end to have a care of yourself and special regard to this last request of mine, that is, in leaving the shrine to honour the saint, and to close your mouth from gaping after that you cannot get, as the unquiet dog in the night that barketh at the shadow of the moon."

The oration of this bawd seemed such music to the ears and mind of Cornelio, that he rather wished a continuance of her jargon than an abridgment of her tale ; but seeing she

gave end to her discourse, with expectation to hear his reply, he dismissed her with this short answer:

"Albeit your present repetition of the abuse in love—seeming in some respect to be assisted both with reason and justice—doth discover diverse faults in sundry women (whereof, as you say, the most part delighteth as much to run riot and seek a change of pasture, as the other takes pleasure in the virtue of true constancy), yet ought we to use such an integrity between the good and evil, that the faults of the wicked do not deface the renown of them that deserve but well. And, as you say, it is hard for a man to love that he hath not, so I note no less rashness in you to give judgment of the thing you know not but by examination. For I am fully persuaded, that no distance of places, nor adversity of times, have power to diminish, and much less dissolve, the affection of her whose presence I hope hereafter to enjoy with no less pleasure, than her absence seems now to give me cause of annoy. And, albeit, I have not yet tasted of the fruit which all lovers do wish, and few happen to find, yet dare I account myself as deeply in the favour of my absent mistress as the best of that happy company. And such weaklings as account no virtue in love but in the encounter of their lascivious desire, and cannot rest satisfied except they crop the herb of pleasure, are always found more liberal in words than constant in love, and more hot in the beginning than able to continue to the end. Neither do I see any experience to the contrary, but that the passion which I suffer ought rather to bear the true title of love than the surname of a simple desire, seeing the delight I take in the remembrance of her beauty is no less pleasure unto me than if I had already performed and tasted of the delicate effect of love; which I am determined to attend, till either the goodness of a better fortune restore me to my desert, or the force of death give end to my desolation; willing you herewith to correct your judgment, and cease to inveigh against her whose constancy and virtue only defaceth the usurped commendation of the most of your corrupt sex. For the rest, the justice of my cause, I hope, will make my excuse tolerable in the opinion of her that sent you; and for your pains I can but yield you the choice of a thousand thanks."

Wherewith, mother rhetorician took her leave and retired, with less contentment in her bad success than assured

hope to prevail in the beginning towards her Mantuan lady; to whom recounting eftsoons the particularities of her discourse with Cornelio, she concluded that he, being limed with another bush, had no power to make a grant of his good-will without a special passport from Milan; "where," saith she, "he hath left both body and heart, and appeareth here but in the likeness and shape of a figure without sense or feeling, and less able to admit the preferment of honour or proffer of reason."

Which albeit seemed greatly to grudge the conscience of the lady, chiefly for that she was intercepted of that which she accounted no less sure than the articles of her creed or to be believed, yet, weighing the reasons of his excuse with the raging oversight of herself in indifferent balance, she made of necessity a virtue and retired to a patience perforce, forgetting not to punish her fault with the penance of repentance, and commend to the skies the incomparable loyalty of Cornelio, with no less gratulation on the behalf of her that had choice of so constant a servant—who, for her part, also, at this while, was in no less care of his well-doing than busily occupied in device how to recover his presence and requite the passion of his painful torment, which he chiefly desired and justly deserved. Wherein as she for her part wished no less to embrace him than he meritorious to possess her; so, albeit there passed certain letters between them, seeming rather to double the desire of them both than yield moderation to the passion of either of them, yet she found the means to coast the malice of her fortune with a contrary sleight, by procuring to her husband a journey of twenty or thirty days' travel. Whereupon she dismissed immediately a courier to Cornelio with the report of the news in this letter following:

"Albeit, sir, calamity of her own nature is so quarrelous that she ceaseth not to assail the afflicted with continual summons of peremptory despair, yet ought we not repose so slender an assurance in the assistance of virtue as either to make a merchandise of the goodness of our fortune, and much less sell the hope of future felicity, nor yet utterly despair of the benefit of time; who, as she is thankful enough to such as suffer her with patience, so hath she presently entered into such compassion of our mutual distress, that, summoning my husband with a journey of a month's travel in foreign affairs,

she hath opened us a most sure means to meet and rejoice together without danger. Wherein, as all such seldom proffers of friendship ought to be no less welcome when they come than they seem of tickle abode when we have them; so, if you wish to be resolved of that which you doubt, and have no less care of your own contentment, my advice is you embrace the benefit of so convenient a time; persuading yourself that if you were here, I would communicate with you more liberally than I dare discourse by letter; and only yourself is of credit to serve as a secretary in affairs of such secret importance. Whereof you may conster the meaning without great study. Only imagine that Fortune is not such a niggard of her friendship as spiteful if her offer be refused, and Time so disdainful that she will not tarry a moment above her stint.—Yours without change, PLAUDINA."

If this news was welcome to Cornelio, I leave it to the judgment of that amorous crew, who seem so resolute and simple in their love that their life is only prolonged by a desired day but when they see an approach of their liberty, with licence to quench their hungry minds with the food they chiefly wish to feed upon. God knoweth the small regard they have to honour, and less respect to the duty of their conscience; and with what slender advice and less time, they make the poor husband a rampire of horns to defend his forehead from the shot of the enemy! Wherein, sure, their delight is not so great, and glory of so foul a conquest of such commendation, as she worthy of treble torments, who, for the glut of her filthy desire, and satisfying their fond importunities, doth make no conscience to defile the marriage bed of her husband, take away the renown of her former estimation, deface the glory of her ancestors, and leave besides a title of villainous reproach upon her children and posterity; of whose reputation she ought to be more careful than mindful to satisfy the greedy appetite of her own pleasure, or foolish pursuit of their filthy love. And from this fountain of execrable abuse distilleth also the sundry sorts of unnatural divisions happening at this day between noble houses and men of meaner descents; the children detesting the father, and the father abhorring them whom he thinks to be none of his, and one brother persecuting another with no less mortality of hate than if they were common enemies of foreign countries.

For the bed being once stained, the blood mixed, and the law of marriage abused, it must needs follow that the fruit proceeding of such seeds can neither degenerate nor be without corruption. Neither can the son yield honour or duty to him whom nature denieth to be his father.

Wherein, albeit I have somewhat exceeded the compass of my commission, yet I am so persuaded of the indifference of those few ladies which feel themselves touched with this short digression, that they will not grudge with this parable of their fault; seeing truth marcheth under our ensign, ready to avouch and witness the circumstance of my allegations. Which, like as I inferred rather to advise you to eschew the like evil than for any derogation of your honour, so it may like you all to excuse my reasons by the integrity of the cause, and pardon me by justice; retiring now with semblable patience to the sequel of our Cornelio, who, construing the words of the letter according to the meaning of the writer, imagined by and by the importance of the affairs she had to communicate with him. Wherein, albeit love moved him on the one side to perform the desire of his lady, yet reason on the other part required him to be careful of his own safety, and not to buy a taste of his slippery pleasure with the price of his life. "For," saith she, "if you go to Milan, and be discovered by any of the French race, or friends of their faction, your danger will be too great to escape, and you shall come to too late a repentance of your folly."

Wherefore, balancing indifferently between doubt and fear, with desire to use this occasion, lest he might seem unthankful to the good-will and request of his mistress, he imparted the whole circumstance to one Delio, a dear friend of his, of whom (being privy from the beginning to his amorous practice) he demanded earnestly a special assistance of good counsel, touching the absolution of his present doubt. This Delio, having trodden already the whole labyrinth of love, and known by experience what an ell of such follies was worth, gave as right a judgment of the disease of his friend as if he had felt the moving of his pulses, or tried the disposition of his water against the sun in an unrinal. Wherein he failed not to discharge the office of a true friend in assaying to remove the occasion and mortify the ill, with these persuasions:

"Like as," saith he, "small sores require slender medicines, and great griefs are wont to try the uttermost

of the art of physic; and that the wise and experienced physician, afore he undertake to cure the disease of his patient, or give certain judgment of his recovery, doth not only examine the occasion of his grief, but makes also his first endeavour to take away and mortify the cause, afore he disclose the skill and hidden mysteries of his art; so the malady of love, being nothing inferior to the raging oppression of the burning fever (who desireth always things that be hurtful, and escheweth the necessary preservatives of health), is neither to be cured nor dealt withal in any sort, unless the patient will suffer the circumstance of his disease to be sifted to the uttermost, and abide an incision of the sore even to the quick, to the end that by the operation of the cataplasm which shall be ministered to you, you despair not of recovery (although there appear diverse likelihoods of danger) nor I brought to answer for my friendship, which I protest to be without spot of dishonest intent. And as it is no less necessary for him that is sick to repose a special credit in his physician, than the minister of medicines to be of exquisite skill (for that the opinion and conceit of his cunning imports a great consolation to the mind of him that is sick), so you must neither deny the virtue of my medicine to work his force, nor doubt of anything I mean to tell you; for the tale can work small effect where the reporter is of slender credit. Therefore, afore I sift you any further, I request you only of one thing, as most chief and necessary to prevent the present peril which attends you: I mean that, in changing your affection, you will also dismiss and break the resolution which I know your heart hath already determined.

"The disposition and exterior appearance of your countenance argue a wonderful devotion you have to visit your oracle and saint at Milan; which also I could well admit, if I saw not in the end of that vain pilgrimage a hard penance, accompanied with more perils than ever happened to the son of Anchises, undertaking to visit the infernal valleys by the guide of his Sibylla. You know well enough your banishment from Milan proceeded of rebellion; and that your offence is so heinous in the conceit of the majesty there, that only the price of your head can make the atonement and quench the rage of his wrath. And seeing the sleight of your enemies and malice of fortune have dogged you and your doings

so nearly since your coming to Mantua, that you have not spoken or done a thing of such counsel but fame hath discovered your intent and made your adversaries partakers of your meaning, it behoveth you to think that of late she is not become so well affected towards you, as she can or will conceal this last and most perilous resolution. Besides, in what sort could you disguise yourself that your sundry secret marks would not bewray you, or what way have you to pass where you are out of knowledge of all men? And admit your own sleight and policy were able to prevail above the malice of your fortune, in defending you from the danger of the way and diverse ambushes of your enemies, are you so persuaded of the assurance of your Plaudina, that you will commit your life and loss of honour to the feigned faith of a deceitful woman, and that without a proof of her constancy? If the mist of fond affection doth so much dim your eyes and gift of present understanding, that you are not able to discover the legerdemains of light women, let my experience warn you to beware of the subtle sleights and fine allurements of so venomous a serpent. What can you tell whether this train she hath made be a stale to betray you, and commit you to the mercy of your enemy? Or peradventure she hath sent for you, because she seeth an impossibility in the enterprise, and rather to bring you in danger than of intent to yield satisfaction to your desire.

"But let us conster her meaning to the best, with imagination that her faith is without corruption, and that she is no less desirous to see you than you (assotted upon her beauty) seem ready to run through the fire of a thousand perils, only to content her; will you buy so vain a pleasure, that is of less moment or abode than the thought of a man, at so dear a price as the loss of your honour and life? Remember that the end of that enterprise cannot be good, whose beginning is not founded upon discretion, and sequel governed by the rule of reason: neither can you more greatly deface the ancient renown of your honour, nor leave a greater spot of reproach to your house and friends that live after you, than to conclude and end the course of your life in the pursuit of so dishonest a quest. And your enemies cannot so largely triumph in your overthrow and death, as your friends have cause to lament that your own rashness and folly were the only furtherers of the fatal bane of your life. Whereof

the contrary part, if being cut in pieces in the service of some noble prince, or yielded to the law of nature in some valiant exploit or enterprise of war, you should not only aggravate the praise of your life passed with the glory of an honourable death, discharge your friends and succession of all impositions of villainous infamy, but also force your enemies to a conversion of their malice into a general commendation of your virtue and undoubted faith towards your prince.

"Besides, if you will weigh the mortal plagues threatened in the gospel to be thundered upon the adulterer and such as contaminate the married man's bed, or rightly measure the penance of the fault with the foulness of the fact, you shall not only judge with me that there is no life more damnable afore God, nor death more scandalous to the world, than to be overthrown in the combat which of right is due to be performed by another; but also that there is more virtue and ease in sufferance, than profit or pleasure in haste, or commodity in rash execution. But if the power of the flesh, prevailing above your resistance, hath stirred up this humour of hot desire, which seems to press you so far that you make no conscience to exchange your former glory for a title or surname of a filthy adulterer, go not so far to seek your destruction, seeing Mantua presents you with sufficient choice and change of relief, better cheap, and with less peril, than the hazard of reputation or loss of life."

This charm of Delio seemed so to enchant and drive reason into the wavering mind of the Milanese, that he took respite to reply till the next morning, thanking him notwithstanding of his friendly advertisements, "which," saith he, "have so unsealed the eyes of my mind that I find myself now able to discern that which love would not suffer me erst to perceive, and much less to fear or doubt." Wherewith, retiring to his lodging, he passed the night in the only contemplation of his fancy: wherein appeared such war and contrariety of thoughts, with figures of hollow conceits, that the desire and course of sleep was wholly converted into an humour of uncertain imaginations. And if, by chance, his eyes offered to close their lids, and summon the rest of the parts to the quiet reposed in sleep, the remembrance and care of his business, interrupting the office of the eyes, presented eftsoons a new conflict and second supply of his

passion ; in such sort as, being too weak to resist the alarum, he yielded to the stronger part, which was the masterless appetite of sensuality ; and holding more dear the pleasures of the flesh than the safeguards of his life, determined to take the ford, and try if fortune would perform as much as she seemed to promise, by a flattering hope (which appeared in his idle brain) to embrace his mistress without danger ; imparting the next day his resolution to his dear friend Delio. To whom saith he :

" Because perils are commonly made greater by report than found dangerous in the adventure, and that all likelihoods seldom or never do happen, the valiant ought not to fear the thing that is doubtful, nor dread the simple moving of a shadow. Neither is there glory of the victory, but where the adventure exceedeth the expectation of man. Wherefore I am persuaded to give a charge of the goodwill of fortune, and take my journey towards Milan to-morrow ; where I be summoned with the writ of my destinies, or malicious doom of unhappy fortune by death. Milan will serve me as well of a tomb as either Mantua or other sanctuary of the world. Neither can I make a better declaration of my faith towards my mistress than in defying the fear of so many perils, to appear more ready to obey her commandments than curious and careful of mine own life : which I account employed with no less justice on her behalf than honour to myself, if the same be put to extreme torments and utterly executed in the place where the view of her own eyes may be the indifferent judges between my firm constancy and small dissimulation. Neither can I leave her a more precious pawn of mine indissoluble love, than, being cut in pieces in the pursuit of her service, to leave the walls and posterns of her palace painted, and all to besprent, with the blood of the most loyal servant and friend that ever bare name to do honour or service to any of that noble sex."

" Your desperate resolution," saith Delio, " exceeding all the experience I have heard or read of any that have been possessed with the like infection, argueth the unbridled humour of love to be a kind of rage, a thousand times more strange and less reasonable than either the burning fever, or frantic malady of such as are affected with the fury of frenzy. For what greater folly, or rather desperation, can be noted in the madman than to run headlong into the midst of the

fire, or commit himself unarmed to the mercy of the glaives and sharp swords of his enemy ? "

How may a man term this same amorous rage, and effect of small reason and less discretion, which accompanies such as make themselves a prey to their proper sensuality, if not some spirit or limb of Satan, sent to torment us in making us the abominable workmen of such miracles of mischief ? And he that saith that love proceedeth otherways than of ourselves, seemeth rather to mock the truth than able to justify his argument by approved authorities ; seeing the mischief is derived of ourselves, and nourished of the corruption of our nature, whose wicked force prevaileth so much over the gift of our understanding and darkeneth the virtue of the spirit, that we are denied to see, and much less to tread, the path of our duty, honesty, or conscience. But the amorous crew of frivolous lovers nowadays, either to support their damnable enterprises with a bolster or show of a new found virtue, or to set a more bravery of their doings than either reason or conscience will allow, or rather to make their sect favoured with a fame or name of perpetuity, have devised to christen their folly by the name of sincere and true loyalty ; which they also forget not to confirm by the title of constancy ; as though without the hazard of the soul, and absolute destruction of the body, such execrable villainies and abuses of men could bear the name, or be registered in the book of virtue.

Wherein albeit I could be assisted with infinities of examples both familiar and ancient, yet, because such discourse would rather seem tedious than thankful to the guilty minds of a number of our countrymen, I am content to dismiss all antiquities, and pursue my allegation with the authority of this Cornelio ; who, rather enchanted than ravished with the remembrance of his lady and suggestion of his own folly, told Delio for end, that if all the ways between Mantua and Milan were strewed or pitched with razors, and every gate and window decked with the double cannon ready charged to salute him at his coming, yet, making little or none account of these mortal perils in respect of the duty he seemed to owe to his dear Plaudina, he failed not to begin to perform the summons of her letter the next morning : when, with two servants no less strange to him than unknown to all men, and himself attired in the weed of a merchant traveller, he departed

Mantua at the opening of the gates. And marching no less speedily than by secret and unknown paths, he measured his time according to the importance and danger of his enterprise, in such sort as he gat within the walls of Milan at the very last glimmer and closing of the evening. Where, refusing the house of his mother, because the prospect, opening upon the palace of his chiefest enemy, seemed more apt to discover than able to hide his being there, he addressed to a dear friend of his, called Monsieur Ambrosio ; where being let in, in the darkest of the evening, he was lodged in a low chamber, joined as a pendle to the uttermost corner of the house, most convenient to work his secret mystery.

His first endeavour, after his safe arrival at Milan, was to send for an apothecary, whose fidelity he had erst proved in the interchange and convey of diverse letters between his lady and him ; who, not so much amazed to see him whom he looked not for as glad of his coming for the contentment of Plaudina, assured him of the departure of her husband. His second diligence appeared in the expedition he used to advertise his mistress of his coming ; whom he requested by a letter, under the conduct of this colcarrier, to appoint a convenient leisure, that he might speak to her in secret. " For," saith he, " the conference I have to impart with you, is of other importance than to be debated in the hearing of witnesses, and much less recorded by any than the only presence of ourselves."

The lady, although she desired nothing so much as the presence of her servant, whose only coming seemed almost to make her exceed the bonds of reason for joy, yet was she semblably tranced in a passion of dreadful conceits and doubtful fear : the one for that she feared the malice of the Frenchmen, the rather because they extended weekly a privy search upon all the houses and places which they judged friends to Cornelio ; the other and chief cause of her dolour was, for that by the wrong dating of her letter, she failed of the day of the departure of her husband ; whereby she had not only procured to him a more danger than needed, but also abused his adventure in being not able to give so long a time to their pleasures as he justly deserved and they both desired. Notwithstanding, she returned the messenger with a gentle answer, wherein, above all other things, she gave singular commendation to his firm loyalty, and no less fault to her own folly and

rashness ; which, because she would not only excuse, but also countervail, or rather exceed, with a recompense to his contentation, she willed him by the messenger to pass by the gate in the attire of a masquer, where she would attend his coming about ten or eleven of the clock the same evening, resolving upon a certain watchword or other secret instructions whereby she might discern him from the rest of his fellowship.

It is to be thought Cornelio did neither mislike the message and much less forget the hour of appointment, nor yet seem a coward in this chiefest exploit of his adventure. I am rather of opinion that his foolish rashness did so much exceed the virtue of the mind, that if the whole garrison of the Frenchmen had been encamped in the street, and ready to receive him upon the point of their pikes, he would rather have accepted the offer of present death than lost so good an occasion to encounter a simple glance or glee of his great friend ; who no less mindful of her promise than ready to perform it with a double diligence, in hope to enjoy an interest of such pleasure as love yields to such as Fortune makes happy and able to receive, attended his coming at the place and hour of accord. And as she was one of the best courtiers, passing the rest of the train and troupe of ladies in beauty, behaviour, and other gifts of flattering show ; so was she more courted with the continual haunts and company of the gentlemen and princes of Italy than any other of what degree soever she were ; in such sort as, at the instant, and present approach of her servant, she was devising familiarly with diverse gentlemen of the city ; who, seeing this masque nobly mounted after the Spanish order, made their stay afore Plaudina. And she, for her part, accepting their courtesy with a countenance more thankful than of ordinary, judged his embassage to the lady to need neither secret witness nor public audience. Wherefore, not ignorant in the office of humanity, and because their presence should seem no impediment to the profit or pleasure of another, they took leave of Plaudina, resigning the camp and captain to the merchant stranger ; whom, if they had known, they would surely have rated the pennyworths of that prey at too dear a price for him to have carried away without a gage or pawn no less precious than his life.

Here, although the fortune of Cornelio had blessed him with double felicity at one instant, both in avoiding the place of company and yielding him large view of the presence of

his mistress without interruption, yet love seemed to stir up such alterations and diversity of amaze within him that the use of his tongue was not only taken away, and the rest of his parts retired to a quivering fear, but also his eyes were so resolved in the greedy gaze of her beauty, that, in place to do her honour with any device or show of his duty by words, he brought her in terror with the view of his dumb behaviour; resembling rather the ghastly figure of Zelio Polino, whom the poets, feigning to be enchanted by his wife, do affirm that for the penance of his offence and abuse towards her, he is bound upright against a wall with a gag in his mouth, without licence or liberty to speak till she pull the peg from between his jaws. So Cornelio, albeit he was an orator sufficient enough, and specially in disputation of love, yet found he here his tongue so punished with the penance of Polino, that he could neither plead for himself at large, nor yet play the part of a stuttering solicitor; till the long view of her proportion of majesty unsealing his eyes, lent him also a countercharm to take away the mystery of his hideous trance, with commission to make a breach of his silence, and restore him to the use and liberty of his tongue, which he exposed as a trial of his new benefit in this sort:

"If all the gifts and good turns which Fortune ever bestowed upon such as received friendship or favour at her hand were here presented unto me, with licence and liberty to choose which I would have, I doubt whether I could pick out one of such a number, that were able to countervail the greatness of my present encounter, or if they all had power to yield me such contentment as I find in the contemplation and regard of your divine beauty. And, for your part, good madam, what greater proof can you have of the honour and service, with unfeigned loyalty, I have long vowed unto you than, for the only respect of the duty I owe you, to see me commit that which is, and ought to be, most dear to all men, to the hazard of a thousand perils. Wherein, notwithstanding if the god of my destinies hath agreed to touch me with the malice of his doom, and publish my sentence of death in this place, I excuse him of present rigour—for that he hath deferred me hitherunto—and account great justice in this fatal execution, seeing yourself shall be judge with what integrity I have served you since the first vow and motion of my affection."

Whereunto Plaudina replied: "If you think you so deeply in the debt of Fortune, for the simple offer of so small a friendship, I account myself no less bound to yield her double sacrifice of semblable thanksgiving; not for that she hath added so great a danger to the declaration of your goodwill (whereof I never doubted), but because in granting us a mutual access and presence together, I may (though not so amply as I would, and as you have deserved, yet in some part) yield you the meed of so great a merit. If you account the pleasure in death—happening in the pursuit of this adventure—peculiar to yourself, you do wrong to the sincere love and loyal affection of your dear Plaudina; who, resolved to pass under the same sentence, will neither exceed you in length of life, nor give you any place in firm constancy of mind. Neither do I greatly fear the threats of present danger, considering your ancient felicity, which hath always delivered you in any of your attempts what difficulty soever appeared in them. Only I quarrel with mine own folly in mistaking the day of the departure of my husband; and grieve no less with the iniquity of present time, who, envying (as it seems) our amorous enterprise, is ready to abridge the course of our desired pleasure, with a sudden return of him whom I wish without eyes in the uttermost end of the orient. Notwithstanding, as the faults proceeding from rash oversight or ignorance are rather excusable than meritorious of free pardon, so, although I have offended grievously, yet do I not despair of mercy, considering that, besides the confession of the fault, I yield me to such penance as shall please you to enjoin me; which, also, you shall find me ready to perform, if, at the first hour after this midnight, you come hither in as secret a manner as you can, and striking but once upon the clapper of the wicket, our Janiquetta (whom you know hath been heretofore a messenger of our love) shall open the gate and convey you into a place of pleasant torments; where, if you find yourself grieved with any wrong I have done you, you may pay the revenge with such interest as you think good."

Wherewith, albeit Cornelio grudged at the speedy return of the goodman, yet, converting the passion of that heavy news into a conceit of present gladness for the frank and liberal consent of his lady, he contented himself with the offer of his time and fortune, and yielding a low reverence to his

lofty Plaudina, retired in haste to his lodging ; where, attending the approach of his hour of appointment, with no less devotion than the papists in France perform their idolatrous pilgrimage to their idol Saint Tronyon upon the Mont Auyon besides Rouen, or our superstitious Catholics of England of late days to the Holy Rood of Chester or image of our Lady at Walsingham, he seemed to attire himself for the bed as though he would not stir out of his chamber that night. By which semblance of dissimulated show, he dismissed the company that was with him, shutting the windows and doors of his lodging, till the dead time of the night, summoning all sorts of people to rest, seemed to put him in remembrance of his promise and the thing he chiefly desired to perform ; so that, arming himself only with sleeves of mail, and a naked rapier under his mantle, he marched towards the palace of Plaudina, with more haste than good speed, and less assurance of safety than likelihood of good luck.

For, as he accounted himself no less free from all dangers than far from any occasion or offer of peril, so Fortune, displaying the flag of her malice, encountered him suddenly with a disaster exceeding his expectation ; whereby she warned him, as it were, of the ambush of future evils which were ready to discover themselves. And albeit this first accident was nothing in respect of the other strange mischiefs which she ceased not to thunder upon him, one in the neck of another, afore the end of his enterprise, yet it ought to have sufficed to have revoked, and made him cross sail, from the pursuit of so bad an adventure ; seeing withal there appeared neither reason in the attempt, nor honesty in the victory.

But who doubteth that the lust of the body is not the chiefest thing that infecteth the mind with all sin ; and that the beauty of a woman doth not only draw and subdue the outward parts, but also levieth such sharp assaults to the inward forces of the mind not surely rampired in virtue, that they are not only denied to eschew such things as be undoubtedly hurtful both to the body and soul, but also drawn to desire that which they ought not to imagine, and much more abhor to do as a thing of great detestation ? Besides, love is of so venturous a disposition, stirring up such courage in the hearts of those champions whom he possesseth, that he makes them not only unmindful of all dangers, but

also to seem able to pass the limits of the sun, with power to exceed the bonds of Hercules and Bacchus. Neither makes he anything unlawful which he thinketh reasonable, nor giveth glory to that enterprise which is not accompanied with infinity of perils. But as the wise man wisheth all estates to deliberate at large afore the device be put in execution, yielding no difference of reward, with a success of semblable and equal effect, to him that rashly crediteth the advice of himself, and such as commit their bodies and doings to one stroke of fortune; so are we warned, by the authority of the same principle, to examine the circumstance of our enterprises, and cast the good and evil that may happen with so sure and steady a judgment that there can no danger so soon appear, but we may be assisted with the choice of two or three remedies to repress it.

Wherein, if Cornelio had been as thoroughly instructed as he seemed altogether infected with the humour of folly, he needed not have fallen into such danger as he doubted least, nor despair of that which he seemed to desire most, and much less assailed, even in the beginning and brunt of his business, with that sudden fear, which erst he was not able to imagine, and now as unlikely and unprovided to shun. For as he attended the coming of Janiquetta to open the door, behold there rung in his ears a great bruit or noise of the clattering of naked weapons and men in harness, seeming (as it was indeed) a set fray between two enemies in the end or corner of the same street, which was so hotly pursued, that one of the skirmishers, being hurt to the death, brake out of the press, and fleeing towards the place where Cornelio stood, fainted and fell down dead at his feet, even as the maid opened the wicket to take him in. Which was not so secretly done, but the eyes of certain neighbours, beholding the fray out of their windows, discovered the going of Cornelio with a naked sword in his hand. Whereupon followed the alarm to the innocent lover, as you shall hear hereafter.

But being within the court, and the gates shut again, he was led by the little *dariolette* of their love, into a *garde-robe* or inner gallery, till the servants were retired to rest; who, for the most part, lay out of the house that night, being busy in visiting the banquets abroad, according to the epicure order of sundry countries in Christendom during the season of Shrove-tide, when diverse gluttons delight in nothing but to

do sacrifice to their belly. And having the rest surely locked in their chambers, and all occasions of suspicion or fear either prevented or provided for (as they thought) Plaudina sent for her servant into her chamber, thinking to work the effect of both their desires, and plant the married man's badge in the brows of her husband being absent. But here they made the reckoning without their host, and were forced to rise from the banquet rather with increase of appetite than satisfied with the delicate dishes they desired to feed upon. For as they had newly begun the preamble to the part they meant to play, and entered into the amorous exercise of kissing and embracing each other—whereof neither the one nor the other had erst made assay together—being at the point to lay their hands to the last endeavour and effect of love (which the Frenchman calleth *Le don d'amoureuse merci*), they heard a great noise and hurley-burley in the street, of the guard and chief officers of the watch ; who, finding the dead body at the door of Plaudina, began to make such inquisition of the murder, with threatening charge to understand the manner and cause of his death, that amongst the neighbours which beheld the fray, there was one affirmed that, at the same instant that the broil was most hot, he saw a tall young gentleman let in at the gates of Plaudina, with a sword in his hand, armed on the arms with sleeves of mail.

Whereupon the captain of the watch began to bounce at the door, as though his force had been able to beat down the walls ; with such a rout and company of Frenchmen assisting his angry endeavour, that both the one and the other of our lovers seemed indifferently passioned with semblable fear—the one doubting this sudden stir and uproar of the Frenchmen to be rather a privy search to entrap him than an *inquirendum* for the murder, whereof he was no less ignorant than innocent ; the other despairing no less of the delivery of her friend, if he fell once unhappily into the hands of the enemy, than doubting the discovery of her own dishonesty, being known to conceal a stranger in the secret corners of her house.

Wherein having, albeit, but bad choice of means to avoid such two threatening evils, and less time to take counsel of their present peril, yet, being of opinion that in the safety of the one consisted the surety of them both, she used the policy of the wise mariner or shipmaster, who in the fury of the storm will not stick to prevent the destruction of the whole with the

loss of the lesser part, and, bestowing his wares of precious value in the surest room of his ship, makes no conscience in such an extremity to expose the rest to the mercy of the angry waves ; so knowing that, if Cornelio were not discovered, the matter would neither grow to suspicion, and much less to danger or cause of fear, she willed him to mount into the midst of a narrow chimney. Where, being denied scope to sit to lean sometimes for his ease, the littleness of the place gave him only licence to stand upright upon a bar of iron, rammed with stone and mortar in both sides of the chimney ; where, having his sword drawn in his hand, he resembled the image of some Jupiter holding a thunderbolt between his fingers, ready to throw at such as, disquieting his sleep, do hunt the little crickets chirping in the walls and crevices of the earth.

And herself, as more hardy, or rather ready of wit in extremities, descends to the court with all the keys of her house in her hand, amongst the rude watch ; where, after she had found the captain, she forgat not to forge sundry causes of grudge against his discourtesy, reprehending his unorderly dealing with many waspish words ; but chiefly for that at so indecent an hour, and unseemly order, he sought to abuse the reputation of her husband, in breaking open the doors of his palace and that in his absence.

Wherewith, albeit her complaint seemed to import a semblance of justice, with no less reason on her behalf, yet the neighbour or first accuser, avouching eftsoons his confession, forced the captain (half against his will) to follow the search. Whereupon, he had the keys delivered, with liberty to ransack each corner and cabinet of the house at his pleasure. Wherein he omitted neither diligence in execution, nor policy in the search. For there was no coffer escaped without its bottom turned upward ; every bed and bolster was tried at the point of a sharp dagger ; and no bench nor hollow place apt to hide a tennis ball was dispensed from the malice of these rakehells of the watch.

But when the Frenchmen in armour came into the chamber where our Cornelio was rammed up in the tewel of a chimney, God knoweth whether he wished him at Mantua with his friend Delio or no ! And you lovers that have passed the like straits may better judge his passion than I able to report the mystery ; but, methinks, I hear him curse, and commit to

the devil both love and all his practices. And being in continual expectation that some rusty halberd should be thrust up into the chimney where he stood, I think at that instant he poured out more prayers to God for his delivery than ever afore he made requests or petitions to his lady to enjoy her beauty. Neither is it like that his appetite continued, or his amorous humour, so fervent as his desire great to be further from the place of such danger. Albeit as it is a general rule that one evil never cometh alone, so this fear was not so great as the future penance of hard digestion. Neither had he scarce time to take breath afore he was assailed with a second misfortune.

For understanding the watch to be retired, and the whole garrison of the enemies without the gates, whereupon (being at the point to descend from his smoky pavilion, as one that accounted himself past the fear of fortune) behold! the goodman alighted at the door; who, finding the streets pestered with people in armour, his doors open, with his house confused and all things out of order, was no less astonied than he had cause, and yet not so abashed at the strangeness of the thing as his wife in double despair of means to avoid this second inconvenience. Albeit as increase of peril, stirring up a fresh supply of shifts, pierceth the uttermost corner of the wits, so Plaudina, standing between the present offer of open shame and the malice of a most unhappy fortune, was driven to retire to the benefit of that gift which the philosopher attributes in common to all women, saying that, in an extremity, the wit of a woman is so much at commandment that she is as sure of a shift as certain of her life.

And making of necessity a virtue, she used such artificial sleight in blearing the eyes of the goodman John her husband, that he allowed greatly the honest diligence of his wife, and blamed altogether the abuse of the captain whom he threatened to requite with semblable courtesy. Wherein, as she doubted nothing of the tractable nature of her simple husband (being glad notwithstanding to have so smoothly appeased the humour of his just anger), so she accounted herself neither free from cause of fear, nor quite delivered from distress, till she had made a means to manifest the coming of her husband to her lover in the chimney; whom, as she knew to be passed the fear of the Frenchmen, so, doubting he would dread no further danger, but descend immediately from his frozen mew.

she took her goodman by the hand and led him from place to place where the watch had left all things out of order, bringing him at last into the chamber where Cornelio stood, like a crow in a gutter, or an oracle to give answer to such as are desirous to be resolved of doubtful demands.

And albeit the violence of the frost with the nipping season of the winter had so pinched all his parts with extremity of cold, together with the passion of fear which he felt during his abode in his narrow castle, or cage of small ease, that the penance he endured seemed rather to exceed the heinous respect of his offence than a sufficient punishment for his fault (being only a desire, and no violation, nor act done), yet the very voice of her husband restored him to such treble perplexity that he seemed to feel the approach and uttermost summons of his fates, and pass through the last trance and passion of life. For being escaped from the danger he feared most, he saw himself subject to the adversity he doubted least. Wherein, also, as the present view of his second peril renewed a lively remembrance of his danger past, presenting more impediments to his delivery than means or ways to escape, so if it were not that necessity giveth courage to the faint stomach, and despair bringeth oftentimes a cause of good hope, I think (in defying all the delays and dallyings of fortune) he had at that instant abridged the pursuit of his amorous enterprise, and natural course of his own life, by showing a tumbling cast from the top, or grisly roof, of his grimy palace.

But Plaudina had double reason in her device; both to advertise her lover (as it were in a vision) that, albeit he was bound to too long a devotion in so unseemly a temple, yet he should not despair of the goodness of a better fortune, and, also, not to seem jealous of her endeavour and diligence in the redress of his case, for that she could not (without great argument of suspicion) abandon the company of her husband, till she had got him to bed. Wherein, notwithstanding, her policy was not less frustrated, and she eftsoons deceived, than the poor image in the chimney assailed with the malice of a third mischief; for her husband, being in bed in his own cabinet, commanded two of his men that had attended him in his journey to lie in the chamber where Cornelio had passed the mystery of so many trances; which, albeit Plaudina resisted to the uttermost she could do, yet, maugre her heart, the authority of the goodman prevailed. Albeit, doubting the

cold villains—riding all day in the frost—would have made a fire in the chimney, and either sacrificed the saint, that meant nothing less than to become a burnt offering, or smothered as an innocent that deserved not such purgatory, she gave special charge not to light so much as a candle within the chimney. For the rest, she prayed that the god and patron of true lovers would take such compassion of his present distress, that if he denied him for that time the due guerdon of his rare and firm loyalty, yet, at the least, he would grant him dispense and safe-conduct to pass through the pikes of his unfortunate dangers.

And as she was thus in earnest contemplation to the majesty of the blind god of Love for the safe delivery of her friend, with no less care how to redeem him from the filthy dungeon of the hollow chimney without the ransom of public reproach to herself and double danger to him ; and he, also, for his part, tiring of a patience perforce, with some hope and likelihood of good luck notwithstanding (for that already he had escaped such three hot skirmishes of Fortune, whom he judged now to have drawn the thread of her spite to an end), behold ! the alarum of the fourth assault, more violent than any of the rest, and exceeding them all in absolute arguments of peremptory perils. For the justice, not satisfied of the murder, and harping still upon the confession of him that first opened the presumption, sent him in the guard of certain officers to the Lord Momboiero, chief of the senate afore whom he had avouched, with new oath, the particularities of his former disposition. Whereupon was enjoined eftsoons a strait commandment to the justice to make a second search in the house of Plaudina ; who, if she were now more amazed than afore, and almost at point to yield to despair, it is to be thought poor Cornelio had no less cause of disquiet ; for that, yielding himself already discovered by his enemies, he judged the new broil and clattering of rusty halberds to be messengers sent by the judge to apprehend him.

Wherein his opinion was the rather confirmed ; for that, as soon as they were within the house, and afore the goodman could make himself ready to meet them, they made no stay till they came to the chamber of the silly house-dove in the chimney ; where, finding by evil hap a case with daggers, and other weapons of suspicion, brought thither by the two servants sleeping in their own misfortune, rather weary with their long

journey than likely to commit a murder, they condemned them by and by as guilty of the fact. Wherewith, omitting no rigour of their office, they coupled the two innocents together in a scarf of hemp. Wherein, as the goodman made haste to come to the rescue of his men, he was encountered by the way by certain sergeants or criminal officers; who, arresting him as prisoner on behalf of the king, led him captive to the castle among the rest of his miserable servants. Neither could he be suffered to commence matter for his own justification, nor have indifference in excusing the innocency of his men; such was the rage of these rakehells and officers of hell, who are commonly more prest to oppress innocence by violence than ready to do justice sincerely, according to their oath and duty.

Here, although Fortune began to change complexion, and moderate somewhat her angry climate towards our sorrowful lovers, by locking the husband with the most of his servants in close prison, yet this happy turn of her wheel, unlooked for, seemed such a mist to the mind of Cornelio, that he was not able to discern that which his heart did divine, nor believe that fortune, upon such a sudden, could convert her angry and wrathful humour into such speedy compassion. Neither could the conceits of his doubtful heart give other judgment, than that the last retire and departure of the guard was rather a vision or dream than a thing of effect. Such be the ordinary alarums appointed to quarrel with the doubtful mind; who, in an extremity, is always more apt to imagine the worst than able to believe, or give credit to, things that be true. And when danger and peril occupy the place, confidence is often turned into fear; and fear is of such force that it doth not only deny us to use counsel in our evil, but makes us, for the most part, to refuse the thing that should be our most safeguard.

Wherein the poor Cornelio seemed no less passioned than afore, and assailed rather with double despair than able to admit any simple proffer of hope; in such sort as, devising to what to vow himself, he put his special and chief confidence at last in his prayers to the great God; whom he desired above all things, with tears, to defend his dear Plaudina from any note of infamy or shame by his means; and for himself, if his glass were now run out, and the doom of his extreme destinies could be no longer deferred, that at the least He would

by the hand of some angel and other virtue of great miracle, bestow him in some soil unknown, afore the fates had full power to execute the uttermost of their rigorous commission; protesting, notwithstanding, that if he might be dispensed withal for this one fault, never to be found so forgetful of himself hereafter, if God and nature were content to seal him an assurance of the race and years of Nestor.

Plaudina, on the other side, seemed indifferently passioned between dissembled sorrow and assured gladness, a forced grudge and an unfeigned joy; grieving in the one, for the imprisonment of her husband, whose innocency she knew did warrant his delivery, and rejoicing in the other, for that contrary to her expectation, Fortune had made the way open, and given her consent for the consummation of the banquet with her languishing lover; whose safe and happy preservation seemed more to delight her than the remembrance of the hard and wrongful imprisonment of her husband grieved her. Neither was she so careful to redeem him from captivity as ready with great devotion to give Love and Fortune their peculiar thanks; the one, for that, in preserving his champions from the malice of danger and mark of open shame, he seemed to restore the field, and assist them with succour, when they despaired most of consolation; the other, for that, contrary to her nature and custom, she had turned their manifold afflictions into a pleasure more precious and acceptable than all the disasters of the whole world seemed grievous or hurtful.

In which passion of joy she mounted into the chamber of Jack in the clockhouse; who, resembling a red herring dried in the smoke against the beginning of the next Lent, attended her coming with no less devotion than the Jews expect their Messiah. And albeit the approach of present joy, forcing some tears in remembrance of the fear passed, seemed for the time to take away the use and liberty of her tongue, yet she cut off the trance of that pleasant sorrow, without the assistance of any special countercharm other than that which proceeded of a vehement desire to behold and speak with her friend in the chimney. Wherefore, after she had dried and drained the wet humour of her watery eyes, and dismissed all arguments of former dole, she retired to her ancient complexion of joy, and calling with a smiling voice to him in the top of the roof, willed him to descend hardly from his dark

throne and theatre of hell: "where," saith she, "if God had not devised the means of your delivery, and seemed willing that you should receive the due guerdon of your loyalty, in consenting to commit my husband to prison, you had still remained there, nourished with the vapour of the moon, longer than either I would have wished or had been necessary for your health."

Here, albeit Cornelio was sufficiently persuaded of the voice of his lady, and that he knew all the house to be void of suspicion or cause of further danger, yet the remembrance of his peril past presented such a fear to fall eftsoons into the like perplexion, that he neither believed that which he heard, nor durst forsake his habitation on high, till he was summoned the second time by his Plaudina; who, by the help of her woman, reared a ladder to the top of the loft where the grimy rood stood; who, being descended and in the presence of his lady, seemed no less amazed than those desolate or, rather, drunken creatures, who, wandering the night by unknown ways, do think themselves guided by the vision of some illspirit. And the wanton lady, on the other side, seeing the ghastly astonishment of her friend, not much unlike the complexion to the chimney-sweepers coming out of the isle of Bergamasca, could not so moderate her present gladness, but, bursting into a sudden laughter, she seemed to crucify the remembrance of the tragedy passed with the singular contentment she took in beholding her Cornelio, dyed, as it were, in the smothering tan-vat of hideous colours.

And, albeit, you lovers, who, for a simple glee and respect of favour of your ladies, have erst been sprinkled with the water of semblable affliction, and (after getting the upper hand of your fortune) possess the presence of your dames in such ugly and deformed attire, can best judge of the present case of Cornelio: I mean whether he had more cause of shame than astonishment, just anger against his fortune, or reason to exclaim his mishap, chiefly for that he found himself so brave a companion in the loathsome badge or livery of the chimney; and whether he had so great courage to communicate with his Plaudina, resembling the black knight or ferryman of Zenoloz, as he showed himself valiant in the attempt of an enterprise of so great adventure. Yet the authority of my history avoucheth thus far of his doings at that time, that, notwithstanding the malice and diversity of all his mishaps,

with the perfumed figure and grisly show of himself, he neither lost courage to demand the due meed and hire of his dangerous travail, nor forgat to do sacrifice to his Fortune for the return of her friendship ; affirming there that they did her wrong that christened her by the name of cruel, and such no less abused her that termed her by the title of an unrighteous or rigorous judge, considering she doth but justice sometime to check or chasten our offences, and we no reason to plead for ourselves but by appellation to the privilege of her favour.

" Neither is she cruel for ever, nor so maliciously bent in the beginning, but she is able and will use moderation in her angry mood, and restore us in the end to treble contentation. And likewise," saith he, "as the poor traveller in a strange country, having once passed diverse light perils and dangers of no great importance, is not only made stronger to encounter greater inconveniences, but also restored to a marvellous contentment and quiet of mind, when, without danger, he may enjoy his rest and record his perils past. Even so Fortune this night hath given us an experience of diverse disasters, both to use her advertisement as a special armour to resist the assaults of semblable accidents hereafter, and also to confirm our affections with a stronger or undoubted unity ; making the pleasures of our love of greater price and moment after so sharp storms of raging tempests. And what is he that is worthy to taste of the delights and pleasures of the world, that is not able to digest one simple pill of bitter confection. Neither doth hope decay but with the end of life ; and the virtue of a most true and invincible loyalty is never frustrate nor void of its reward.

" And touching the storms past, my dear Plaudina," saith he, " like as it is a chief consolation to a man in calamity to know his mishap, so there is also a special comfort that followeth the remembrance of the evils which we have already suffered, and a treble contentment being permitted to record them without danger. And he that is desirous to be crowned with the garland and glory of victory, must not fear the malice of peril nor hazard of life ; for who contemneth death, escapeth his malice ; but such as fear and flee from him, do often fall into his danger. Neither is there less fame in the valiant adventure than in the fortunate victory. And, for my part, if my life had ended in the assault of any of these distresses, the same had not exceeded a simple oblation of

my duty towards you ; which also had followed with no less expedition than I had great desire to give you so unfeigned a show of my service, if in the very act had not appeared a manifest derogation and cause of infamy to your honour."

Wherewith meaning yet to prolong his discourse, he was interrupted with the reply of Plaudina ; who, more desirous to taste of the pleasures to come than willing eftsoons to prefer a second view of the mischiefs passed, wished him to dismiss the remembrance of their former perils, and seem more willing to embrace the gift of present time. " For there is not so great consolation in the record of our misery past, as cause of worthy annoy, if we seem unthankful to the new offer or gift of our fortune. And albeit," saith she, somewhat smiling, " that your boldness was more than deserved praise, yet your felicity, you see, hath defended you from peril ; and the rashness of the valiant is oftentimes turned into an increase of his glory, with double contentment not looked for."

Wherewith embracing her Cornelio, she helped to disfurnish him of his loathsome attire. And after he had purified his grimy body in two or three baines, made for the purpose by the *chambrière* whilst they were in discourse, they entered together the lists in a fair field-bed ready dressed, armed only with naked weapons ; where it is no less hard for the ignorant to judge their encounters, than impossible for the absent to witness who won the price of the battle. Only I leave the sentence of them both to the resolution of you, my lords, that have or would be special sticklers in such a combat. But thus much I may imagine without offence, that the innocent hornsby in the castle found not so much pleasure in his prison, as Cornelio took delight, being the lieutenant of his bed, in dancing the married man's round without other music than the instrument of his wife. Which both, triumphing indifferently over the unfortunate and miserable bird in the cage, and rating the pleasures of the rest of that night, with an advantage of seven or eight days more, at what interest they thought good, forgat not to dub him that was absent, Knight of the forked order of Vulcan.

And albeit Fortune showed here a marvellous partiality and cunning in the convey of this business (I mean to advance the attempt of the lover, by the oppression and unjust captivity of the innocent husband) yet was not her favour too clear, but there appeared a threatening summons of speedy change ;

for that the goodman, being justified within six or seven days' trial, was redeemed from prison. Whose delivery was not so acceptable to himself as displeasant to his two corrivals; whereof the one, feeding him with the reversion and leaving of another man, gave him only the possession of a shape and body of a woman without a heart; and the other, weary or cloyed with the toil of one kind of exercise, or not able any longer to maintain the skirmish without fresh supplies, or fearing, peradventure, the turn of his Fortune (who never yields us pleasure without a sharp repentance in the end, if we prevent not her doom by discretion) was as willing to resign the fort as at the first he seemed desirous to enter the breach.

Whereupon, resolving upon another time for the further consummation and complot of their felicity, they departed, not without sign of secret sorrow, appearing by the tears standing in their eyes—the one to her husband (who, wearing by ignorance a forked garland, made of the leaves of the tree whereof another had culled and cropped the fruit, was content with that he found, and rejoiced in his happy encounter), the other, not without great danger, retired to Mantua. Where, taking more pleasure in the repetition of his perils passed than desirous (without better advice) to reiterate, or undertake again, the like adventure, he discoursed the whole to his friend Delio; who, for his part, rejoicing more in the safe return of his friend than commending his wisdom in the attempt of so rash and perilous an enterprise, exclaimed against the detestable rage and fury of love.

Which, as all antiquities do affirm to be of more force and infection, than all the rhubarb of Alexandria ar Anticyra is either able to heal or delay the least fury of so incurable a poison; so the familiar experience of this age, justifying the protestation of former time, doth yield us such diversities of examples, touching the raging disposition of that frantic humour, that we ought not only to shun the air of such a pestilent plague (no less than the mariner that goeth aloof, and giveth place to, the hard rocks in the dangerous ocean), but also to stand so surely upon our guard, that we seem not once to listen to the enticing summons or lure of so execrable corruption. Who, once taking possession of the sensible parts within us, besides that he ceaseth not to interrupt our quiet with continual torment and passion, stretcheth yet his

power so far, that he brings us in case not only to commit our lives to manifest perils, forget the duty of our conscience, with breach of the commandment of God, but also—to satisfy the appetite of wanton lubricity—he makes us corrupt the purity of the soul with the spot of abominable adultery, a sin most apt of all others to incense the vengeance of God against us. Whereof we have sure proof in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, with diverse other countries and commonwealths which He hath plagued and brought to ruin for the only licentious living of the people.

SIXTH TALE

THE VILLAINOUS ABBOT

THE ARGUMENT

LIKE as all ages, from the first foundation of the primitive Church, are void of record or remembrance of so great diversity in religion as the wickedness of our present time doth present unto us, so the opinions at this day are not so different one from another as the abuse of the Babylonian or diabolical sect of Rome appears so plainly in their detestable trade of living, that their own villainy and fruits of corruption discovereth to the dimmest eyes that be, how far they are from the path of sincere and true doctrine; and yet, marching unworthily amongst the troop of the faithful, are not ashamed to arrogate unto themselves the title of the anointed of the Lord, with protestation that they only bear the badge of true Christianity. Wherein, albeit it agreeth not with the task I have taken in hand either to argue or move question—because both the one and the other belong to the office of the theologian or divine of learning and authority—yet, seeing a daily increase of their disorder, with a slack endeavour of such as (having authority to expose unto them the rod of reformation) seem rather partial on their behalf, than ready (according to their duty) to yield due punishment to their detestable error, I may without offence bolt out mine opinion touching their abominable trade of life, being confirmed chiefly therein with infinite examples of lascivious exploits, and other inordinate trade of living, in the persons of such as make semblable profession. And truly as we do but right to yield a dutiful reverence to such as be true prelates and pastors of the little flock dispersed through the world, together with a general zeal to the order of them that be called to the sacred sanctuary; even so we commit offence, in mine opinion, in believing that there is any honour or commendation at all due to them whose lives expose more arguments and proofs of infamy than the most vile and swearing ruffian that ever did service to the impudent courtesan of Rome.

Neither is it a seemly honour and ornament for the Church of God to see a prelate, puffed up with vanity, jetting up and down the streets upon his foot-cloth, attended upon as a satrap with a train of dashbucklers or squaring toss-pots, and himself pinked and razed in the attire of a young bridegroom ; with his heart curled by art, falling in locks, as it were by appointment, upon his forehead, with more curiosity than an old idol or image of Venus ; perfuming the streets with the smell of musk and amber, which he hath cunningly inclosed in the seams of his garments. Besides, what example of virtue is it, to see one of our reverend religious fathers and governors of convents, more given to court the dames with requests of sensuality, than to turn over the leaves of the New Testament or other sacred institutions left unto us by Christ and His disciples ; and employ more study in device to seduce and suborn their neighbours' wives and daughters, than to visit their diocese and defend the silly sheep against the malice of the ravening wolf seeking to devour the few that be left ? Is he worthy to be admitted to feed the flock, or bear the title of Christ's shepherd, that lives in more adultery, fornication and drunkenness, than he that makes only a profession of such evil all the days of his life ? Or how is he able to reclaim such as be out of the way of salvation, that detesteth the Scripture, delights in wickedness, and prefers absolute example of the most peremptory sin that can be ? Whereof the Italian Bandello hath drawn a most true and lively pattern in the person of a Neapolitan abbot ; which I have accounted of necessity to prefer amongst my volume of discourses, as well to the confusion of himself and such as resemble him in condition, as to give worthy glory to the virtue of a pure virgin who had her honour in such reputation, that she sought rather to end her days in the defence of her chastity than to commit the use of her body to the fleshy will of an abbot, more full of villainy than participating with the office and duty of a true Christian.

All men, whose experience by travel is a witness of the singularities of Italy and Spain, are of opinion, I am sure, that Naples is one of the most rich, pleasant, and populous cities in Europe ; both for the beauty and fertility of the country round about, the magnifical plot and situation of the town, prospecting with open casements upon the height of the high-sea

Tyrrhenian, and also the warlike garrison of gentlemen of all countries, lying there for the defence of the frontiers, with the civil disposition of the people inhabiting the said paradise.

There may you see a plain and pleasant champaign, yielding a wonderful solace, with her delicate air breathing upon such as use the fields for wholesome recreation, and nourisheth besides all chases of delight necessary for the exercise of nobility. And he that wisheth to be privy to the pleasure of solitary places, may see there the wonderful arts and industry of nature, declared in the convey of little hills or pendles of the earth, hanging as it were by a frame of geometry, beautified on all parts with an infinity of oranges, lemons, and other trees odoriferous, yielding a commodity and pleasure peculiar to the town, and general benefit to the whole country and strangers passing that way, as well by the enticing savour of those trees, as sugared taste of the fruit. The bottoms of which delightful groves do discover certain valleys, no less rich in fruitful grafts and plants of strange kinds than the champaign, yielding a plentiful increase of corn of all sorts; where the meadow, also, clad with his green garment at all times of the year, is hung continually with a tapestry of all colours of herbs and flowers, with other livery of Dame Flora; who assists this heavenly glee in the valleys, with the juices of sundry clear springs, yielding at all times of the day a temperate dew, to take away the vehement heat of the sun; in such sort as the strangers passing by, imparting of the air and wholesomeness of the place by the breath of a mild zephyr, are drawn thither by delight, and forced to repose and refresh their weary bodies for a time with the solace, whereof those places yield an indifferent plenty to all men.

Besides, he that is desirous to be partaker of the marvels of nature, hidden in the entrails of the earth, let him take a boat and visit the islands; where, amongst the wonders that Pozzuoli brings forth, he shall see the hot puddles, from whence distil the baines, so necessary for the health of man, with the puddling-trough or cave of Sibylla, by which, as the poets feign, Aeneas made his entry in descending into hell to speak with his father. There appears also a remembrance of the artificial labyrinth of Daedalus, with the sumptuous palace of the Roman Lucullus; whose lodgings, with so many crooked turnings and windings everyway, chapels, and places

of solitary resort, exceeding (according to the poets) the computation of man, were swallowed in a moment in the devouring throat of Tyrrhenum, by a sudden trembling or shaking of the earth, commonly called an earthquake. Finally, he shall be there presented with the secret and most sure lodgings, builded by nature in the belly of the hard rocks, with other wonders in such infinite number, that only that place yields pleasure sufficient to feed the eye and mind of man, with more delight than the whole remainder of Europe is able to furnish.

Wherein I am chiefly moved to note you a particular description of this paradise, to the end that, as the places of solemn and solitary regard do commonly mortify in men all occasions of wanton exercise, so the planet that governeth those plots of earthly pleasure, prinking forward our effeminate disposition, stirreth up the humour of lascivious lust, with an inclination more ready to perform the frail suggestion of the flesh, than provide for the health of the divine part of the mind which is the soul. Neither is our present age so plentiful of virtue or virtuous effects but the view of our ancestors' lives past gives us sufficient cause to blush and be ashamed, in that we are found so weak in the imitation of their exploits and exercises of virtue.

Wherein, besides an infinity of examples proceeding of the wickedness of our time, I may be bold to confirm mine opinion with a familiar experience of an abbot of Naples; whose young discretion, equal to the greenness of his years, made him no less insufficient to govern the state of his vocation, than unable everyway to discharge the office wherein he was invested by oath and habit of religion. For having also the consent of noble race (whereof he was descended) to favour the wilful appetites of his unbridled youth, he took more delight to assist the exercises of nobility (I mean in making one at all manner of dances, masques, mummeries, dressed for the honour of ladies with covered faces, and other recreations of pleasure, convenient only for the courtier) than to sit in the chapter-house upon reformations of his monks, or to employ any part of his time in the study of the sacred volumes of the Church.

He was also admitted a necessary companion to some of the governors and captains there, for that he kept an ordinary table, and free diet for gentlemen · being a thing most

acceptable to the Spaniard, who at home keepeth him within the compass of thin and sober cheer, and abroad is nothing inferior to the devouring Almain, resembling by that means the sparing order of the niggards of old time, in their dry and hungry banquets. And to the sin of these excesses in delicate fare, he added an offence no less heinous and most unseemly for any of his calling, dividing the day into hours, and hours into imitation of pleasures. Sometime he was seen in the streets in the attire of a gallant or young courtier. Sometime he visited the haunts and assemblies of ladies, courting such of them as he found to give most ear to his idle talk; neither respecting the opinion that passed of his lightness, touching the violation of the holy order of his profession, nor the dishonour he did to the house from whence he descended, but gloried rather in that he could so artificially perform the parts of a philautos, or flattering lover, than, in revealing the mysteries of the Scripture, to seem to imitate the true simplicity of life of his virtuous predecessors in that place.

Whereupon followed immediately a declaration of the vile fruit of so vicious a life. For as Monsieur le Moine passed one day in great bravery upon his foot-cloth through the fairest street of Naples, exposing a rich show by reason of the glee of the goldsmiths' shops, he glanced, by chance, upon one of the fairest women (as he thought) harboured at that time within the walls. And following the pursuit of her beauty, with a greedy gaze of his eye, maugre his heart, he was forced to a sudden stay right over against the place where she was.

Which time of abode his eyes forgat not to employ in taking large measure and view of her proportion everyway; making such report to the heart and rest of the interior parts, that in one moment he became assailed with that wherein he was ignorant for experience, and less assisted with necessary resistance; feeling within him a hot war between the sensible parts of reason and sensual provocation of the flesh, with a present captivity of his ancient quiet by the common enemy of the ease of man, which we call properly the passion of love. Who at this first encounter rampired himself so strongly within the inward parts of this young abbot, that he only governed his thoughts, and disposed his doings altogether by his discretion; ceasing not to flatter his fond humour with instincts of vain conceits, till he brought him to the stage to play the last act of the comedy, where he received the due

guerdon of his folly, with open shame and rebuke of the multitude. And when time summoned this religious fondling to depart from the view of his new mistress, he seemed in no less pain than if there had been present incision made into his entrails, to cut in sunder the strings whereupon his heart is staid, or that (according to the poets) he felt the eagle of Prometheus pecking upon his liver.

The girl was the daughter of a goldsmith, no less dear to the father than extremely beloved of her mother, both for her beauty and promptness of wit, and, also, for that in her young years appeared such arguments and signs of virtue that she was noted the paragon and pattern of all degrees of her time for womanly behaviour, and nothing inferior to the best touching the chaste order and honest convey of her life, wherewith she beautified the mean descent of her parents, and left a rare example to the ladies of greater calling, who think their renown sufficiently confirmed by the height and honour of their house, without putting to the action and effect of virtue ; which indeed, as it is the badge of true nobility, so it hath also authority to make noble the meanest descent that is. And, truly, as the vain woman exalteth herself like to the birds, whose natural lightness conveys them to the stars (I mean, takes pleasure in the abundance of her riches, preferreth the magnificence of her house, imagining her beauty to be worthy to sit in the highest theatre of the world), so the wise woman is glorified only in the gift of sincere and pure simplicity, with a wonderful care to keep her name without spot, and the course of her life so upright that the malice of evil tongues may have no power to enter, and much less pierce with any worthy slander.

But now to our Gonsaldo and amorous abbot, who, bathing in the lake of his follies, thought as great impossibility to retire or dismiss this first alarum or summons of love, as to comprehend all the water of the ocean within a little urinal. Neither would he dispose himself to try the force of any resistance ; but determined (at what price soever it were) to impart his passion to the girl ; which he imagined would move in her a consent of reciprocal affection. Herein the opinion of the poet is justified, saying that lovers repose a certainty in dreams and proclaim a sure victory of the uncertain object of their fancy. Like as this fond abbot, being limed with a simple look or glance at unawares, doth promise himself the

conquest of the prey, against whom he hath as yet used neither force nor policy, and much less dressed any ambush.

He forgat not every day in the week to make his promenade on horseback in the street where dwelt the saint to whom he had vowed such solemn devotion. Wherein for a more glory of himself, and the rather to seduce the maid, he appeared in several attire and change of horse, twice or thrice a day, not forgetting in passing by the house of the goldsmith to take measure of the door, glance upon the window, and pierce with the drawing regards of his eye through every crevice of the wall, to the end he might encounter a second view of her whose first regard had ministered unto him the broth of infection. And if fortune were content at any time to give him a sight of her, whether it were at the door or out of the window, or in other place which denied him favour or liberty to speak to her, I think he forgat not to expose arguments of his grief, by the pitiful regards of his countenance, wanton turning of the eye, and other messengers of his passion, arguing the torment he endured for the desire he had to do her service.

He understood at last, by secret inquisition, what church her mother haunted for the performing of her prayers, and that her daughter was her only companion in these devotions; whither also he directed his pilgrimage; and, dissimulating with God, he played the hypocrite, in converting his regards from the altar or place of levation to behold the beauty of the goldsmith's daughter—the saint to whom his heart yielded most honour; making of the house of prayer the shop or forge to frame iniquity; exceeding in this respect the barbarous abuse of the heathenic Turks and infidels, who give more reverence to their mosques, where God is blasphemed and His Son abjured, than the Christians nowadays to the temples and houses dedicated to the Lord to perform the ministration of the sacraments, with open publication of the will of our Saviour Christ; whom, with Saint Paul, we ought to pray for the subversion of Babylon, and restoration of the true Church, dispersed into divers corners of the world by the malice of the pope and his wicked disciples; whereof this abbot, being not the least in authority, was nothing inferior to the most abominable in all vices. Whereof he gave sufficient proof in two offences of equal detestation; the one in seeking to deflower a maid contrary to the oath of his

religion, the other in abusing the house of God, as a place of bawdy practice to perform the effect of his cursed device; being more devout in courting the ladies of Naples than curious to reform the abuses of his idle convent.

But the girl, noting the inconstant order of prayer in our reverend father Gonsaldo, together with his wanton regards, full of lascivious desire, imagined by and by with what iron the gentleman was shod, and to what saint he would gladly offer his candle. Wherefore, thinking it no breach of good manners to play mock-holiday with such a master fool, gave him scope now and then to behold her at large; and to beat the hammer more deep into his head, would requite his amorous glance with a semblable glee, and suddenly retire and vanish out of his sight with an angry farewell, as though she disdained his wanton offer; with intent, notwithstanding, to shun his voice and place of presence no less than the encounter of any venomous beast, fearing to repose either credit in his honesty, or so much assurance in her own pudicity, as to open her ear to the charm of a frivolous lover, or who thinks it no offence to take away the purity of a maid. Whom we may compare to the red rose, desired of everyone, so long as the morning dew maintaineth it in odoriferous smell and pleasant colour, but when the force and heat of the sun hath mortified its orient hue, and converted its natural freshness into a withered leaf, the desire to have it decayeth with the beauty of the thing. Even so she that hath once mortgaged the flower of her virginity, is not only despised of him to whom she hath been so prodigal of that which she ought to make a most precious jewel, but also in common contempt with all men, what show of dissembled courtesy soever they present unto her.

Whereof the mistress of Gonsaldo was nothing unmindful, who, preferring the honour and reputation of chastity afore all the respects of the world, seeing withal that the blind abbot pursued more and more his amorous quest, prevented his expedition by making her a stranger to his presence, shunning all places of his repair, and, to take away all occasions that might give increase to his desire, she forbare to visit the churches, unless it were at such hours as they were void of other company; and yet with such regard, that she made, as it were, a privy search in all the corners and quires of the temple to prevent his subtlety in dressing some ambush to

invade upon her a sudden. And if by any chance he saw her and saluted her in the streets, she crossed sail on the other side, and closed her eyes as against some hurtful encounter, yielding him no other countenance than she might have avouched to the most infidel in the uttermost islands of Tartary.

Which brought the silly friar into such mortal perplexity that despair began to appear, with the approach of sundry peremptory diseases, chiefly for that the hire of his earnest love was returned with sundry sorts of cruelty and disdainful repulses; occupying his brain with such contrariety of thoughts, that he was void of counsel to what saint to vow himself, or upon what wood to make his arrows; seeing he was neither able to mortify, nor use moderation in, his passion, and much less was assisted with any means to communicate the greatness of his grief to her whose beauty had made him the slave of folly. Wherein, albeit he saw a vanity to use the office of a *dariolette* or bawd—for that the virtue of the maid argued a detestation of such embassadors, and to write to her appeared a great difficulty, for that she was always in the presence of her mother, who, using the virtue of her daughter as a solace of her old years, was no less careful of her honesty than belonged to so precious a jewel—yet, feeling a continual aggravation of desire, with a flattering offer of love to reward him in the end with the prey of his pursuit, he determined to suborn a shameless messenger to bewray his shameful intent; and therefore put his request upon terms in a letter of this effect:

"If my destinies had done execution upon my body when first they brought me to the view of your beauty, I had not been a present experience of your cruelty, nor you the occasion of my unworthy torment. For if death by nature had prevented the beginning of my love, I had been free from the force of passion, discharged of all mortal grief, and you dispensed withal from the imputation and cause of a double ill; the one to abuse the virtue of yourself and do wrong to the renown of all women by preferring effects of rigour; the other in disdaining the service of him whose life and death poiseth indifferently in the balance of your goodwill; dissembling also not to see the circumstance of my love, to drive me to desperation, and at the point to use unnatural force

against myself. How often, alas! have I made you privy to the inward affection of my mind, by the outward regards and glances of my exterior parts? How often have you acknowledged the same by argument of semblable glee, and immediately denied the whole by a sudden show of angry complexion; either disdaining utterly the offer of my service, as one unworthy to enjoy the preferment of your favour, or dallying with my earnest suit, to give increase to my passion! I have often been upon the way to disclose unto you by mouth the thing wherein your heart hath already given judgment of my meaning, albeit the desire not to offend you anyway hath stayed the expedition of my intent, suspending my grief till the greatness of the same hath forced a present vent, with this simple request: that as fearing to impart the full of so great a matter to so uncertain a messenger as a piece of paper, so it may please you to give me credit of my conference, where only ourselves may be witnesses of that which I have to discover and am no longer able to conceal. Wherein, if there be any bond of consideration in great ladies, on the behalf of the offer of their inferiors, imagine how justly I deserve well of you; and with what reason you ought to pass a grant of so small a favour to him who is no less able (as you know) to procure your advancement with what portion of wealth yourself shall think good, than ready to perform all such things as you shall but imagine and wish to be done. Whereof I send you a confirmation herewith, sealed with the oath of my religion, and with protestation of the faith and life of your most loyal and desolate servant, GONSALDO."

He had no sooner written this letter, but he was in mind eftsoons to commit it into morsels, or to make it a sacrifice to the fire, despairing belike of the success, till at last the blind guide and first author of his folly, reprehending his want of courage, reinforced him to a forwardness, persuading him that the beginning was good, and argued a sequel of contentation. "The rather," saith he, "for that the tender years, with small discretion, preferreth an ignorance in the girl of your meaning. And seeing access and conference be denied, the next policy is to use the advantage of writing, which declareth the effect of that which is painted in the outward regards of the face. The words of your letter may also import such a charm, that her present rigour may be converted into speedy compassion;

for as there is cunning in enchanting, so the mystery cannot be wrought without the assistance of words."

Which foolish suggestion restored the abbot to a hope. And making conscience to commit the convey to the credit of any of his convent, for that he doubted their wisdom in performing so secret an embassage, he used the expedition by one of the valets of his chamber; whom, after he had put in remembrance of the ancient favours he had used on his behalf, and how much he reposed for himself in the assurance of his fidelity, he said he was now to employ his faith and diligence in a business of no less value than the price of his life. "Wherein," saith he, "albeit thou mayest conster some part of my meaning by the circumstance of the late change and alteration thou hast noted in me, judging, peradventure, the same to proceed of some amorous humour, yet, although I consent and make good the conceit of thy fancy in that surmise, neither thou, nor all the diviners of the world, can name her, who (as thou seest) hath made me the slave of her beauty. This is the secret wherein I am to make a last experience of thy endeavour and wisdom; to make a present of these letters to her, who hath not yet vouchsafed to lend me the use of one simple regard of favour to qualify the heat of my burning martyrdom." Wherewith he told him the name of his mistress, the street and sign where her father dwelt, with strait commandment in the end not to omit any moment or offer of time that might seem to further the execution of his charge.

The valet, glad to have so good a means to make declaration of his loyal zeal towards his master, admitted the enterprise, and gave him assurance of his diligence, willing him in the meanwhile not to lose courage. "For that," saith he, "there is no fortress so well defended, but at length it is rendered by composition, or won by assault."

Wherewith the abbot departed to his chamber flattering himself with the promise of his man, who, desirous to relieve the distress of his master, added such diligence to the dispatch of his commission that the next day he found the means to accost Parolina, occupied all alone in her meditations in the church; where, presenting himself afore her with more assurance than the passioned abbot, gave her the reverence of his country, and desired her not to dismay, if, upon so small acquaintance, he discharged so boldly the part of a familiar

messenger. "Wherein," saith he, "if there be offence, I prefer, good madam, for my excuse my lord and master." Upon whose behalf, he craved so much favour as to read his letter; which, after he had kissed with great humility, he offered to the chaste maid: who, knowing the messenger, for that she had seen him often follow the train of Gonsaldo, gave judgment also of the cause of his coming. Wherefore she did not only refuse it; but also, with certain terms of reproach, returned him with an answer contrary to the expectation of himself and contentment of him that sent him.

"What," saith she, "doth your master account me of such simplicity, that I have not long since discerned the intent of his folly? Doth he think I am any other than one that sets as dear a price of mine honour as the best lady in Italy? Or is he of opinion that the respect of his authority, or greatness in degree, can force me the rather to a remorse on the behalf of his wicked meaning? No! no! tell him I have neither to do with him, and less cause to accept his letters. Neither ought he to address such embassages to me; who cannot, nor will not, be thankful to any in love, but such as my parents shall give me in lawful marriage. Is this his mask of holiness, to cover so great a villainy under the habit or shroud of simplicity? What argument of virtue is this in him, whose office is to prescribe principles of honest life? Can he discharge the oath of his religion, in seeking to corrupt the purity of virgins and expose an example of the greatest villainy that is? Let him besiege the fort that is as glad to yield as he ready to summon, and bestow his charms and letters upon those, whose regard and care of honour is equal to the malice of his meaning. And, for your part, let it suffice you that I pardon your first folly; and cease henceforth to proceed any further, lest you be paid with the money ordained to discharge the hire of such messengers."

Wherewith she flung out of the church, and, not without some passion of just anger, repaired to her father's house, not imparting any part of the accident to anyone of her parents, trusting that as her desire and intent was to live in the trade of an honest woman, so God would assist her virtuous respect, and defend her chastity against the malice of the wicked. She doubted to discover the case to her mother, for fear some slander would have followed; neither durst she impart it to the old man, lest in complaining of the wrong, his poverty had

been found too weak to contend against the authority of the abbot, and by that means to have been worse dealt withal than either he deserved or she desired ; but leaving an example to all women, to use like modesty in semblable distresses, she committed herself and cause to the protection of the Heavens.

By this time the valiant messenger of Gonsaldo was returned to his master, communicating not only the particularities of his answer, the disdain she showed to his letters, and small account she seemed to make of the offer of his good-will, but also persuaded to correct the humour of his appetite, and dismiss the remembrance of her beauty, bestowing his affection upon some such as hath more discretion to yield him consideration, than the foolish daughter of a simple artisan. Which report, albeit, brought in an increase of double passion to the martyrdom of the poor abbot ; both for that the terms of her answer argued an aggravation of her cruelty, and absolute despair hereafter to enjoy the benefit of her good-will. Yet he had the gift to dissimulate the inward pangs of his grief with a wonderful patience, converting his humour of fretting melancholy into terms of sorrowful exclamation, in this sort :

" Ah ! " saith he, " I see well thou art ignorant in the forces of love, who is not easily supplanted after he hath once conquered the rampire of the heart. Neither art thou privy to the operation of his pills ; who, differing from the nature of other passions assailing the mind of man, do make us desire that we cannot get, and love the things which hate us mortally. And is this not a sufficient experience of the perversity of women, seeing the more I endeavour to prefer my service to my cruel Parolina, the less account she makes of mine offer ; and the more I languish in desire, the greater pleasure takes she in my martyrdom ; that I wish, alas ! that some oil of holy thumb might presently close mine eyes against the light of this world, or else the virtue of some happy enchantment, distilling from the arbour and pot of some Elysium, might with speed remove the veil of her rigour, and stir up an humour of compassion to the relief of my painful torment. I see thy advice is justified everyway by reason, and when I dispose myself to follow thy counsel, I feel within me I know not what, which worketh my will with constraint to pursue the summons of mine appetite, in such sort that the voice which

uttered the repulse hath also pronounced the fatal sentence of my life."

Wherein he had yet proceeded, but that the pangs of inward sorrow, compelling the conduits of watery humours to discover themselves, forced a vent at his eyes in great abundance of tears; which, drowning the words of further discourse in his mouth, moved his valet also to equal dolour; who, notwithstanding, preferred such consolation to his master as sorrow would give him leave to utter, with a frank offer to pawn his life, with the rest of his worldly portion, to redeem the quiet of the abbot, and put him in possession of her whom he accounted the sovereign cataplasm for his mortal disease. Wherewith he comforted eftsoons the silly Gonsaldo; who, telling him that after he had got the consent of convenient time and opportunity, he would summon him to an effect of his promise, dismissing therewith his faithful servant, and retiring himself to a simple comfort in this last resolution, for certain days forbare to visit the streets, churches, or other places, where afore he was wont to make his offerings and promenades; thinking in shunning the places of her repair and presence, he should at last force a forgetfulness of her beauty. Wherein, notwithstanding, he seemed to sprinkle water upon hot cinders, and brought more oil to his match: and all his travail therein stirred up a fresh supply of drawing baits, moving an increase of desire, with augmentation of his folly, which after he assayed to put into execution.

For the more he went about to root the remembrance of her beauty, the more surely did love imprint her picture in the bottom of his heart, with provocation not to give over the quest, but proceed in the pursuit of so pleasant a prey. In the day the whole cloister or circuit of his abbey could scarcely comprehend the sundry imaginations of his brain; and his bed in the night presented him with as much rest as he that is bound to tread continually the labyrinth of endless toil. Wherein, raving thus in a passion of contrariety of thoughts, he accused himself of cowardness, for that the offer of so faint a resistance made him retire his force, without giving a more hot assault to the place he meant to conquer. Wherewith, remembering how often he had heard that women, what desire soever they have of themselves, to be thankful to him that courts them with the offer of love, yet take they, notwithstanding, a singular pleasure to be assailed with

importunities intermeddled with a little constraint or force, he determined to employ the uttermost of his forces, and to pay himself (maugre her resistance) the hire of his travail with the most precious jewel or treasure she had, at such time as Fortune would give him the favour of a convenient time and place to levy the last alarum; thinking, with the advantage of his policy, to compel her to tread the dance which she never meant to practise if not in lawful marriage.

Here you may note a familiar experience, that he that is in love, albeit he be blind touching the knowledge of reason, yet, for the device and execution of a folly, he hath more eyes than he whom the poets affirm to have an hundred lights for the guard of Jupiter's cow. For that this foolish abbot, attending daily an offer of commodity and advantage of time to give a charge upon his pleasant enemy at unawares, used such diligent watch to descry her doings, that he was made privy to the certain hour wherein she was determined to attend upon her parents to a farm or grange they had, not the most part of a league from the city. In which opportunity and offer of thankful time, the blind abbot reposed a singular commodity of his cause: for that, as you have heard, he determined to invade her with an ambush at unawares, and so ravish her out of the hands of her parents by main strength. Whereunto he added an effect, without regard to the slander which attended so wicked an enterprise, or the abuse he committed against the order of his religion, and much less the estimation and honour of the house whereof he was descended.

Let this experience suffice to confute the opinion of the most of our lovers nowadays: who, making a god of the idol of love, do not let to give him place among the most perfect and heroical virtues that are: affirming that all civility and courteous behaviour amongst men is derived of the discipline taught in his school. Let the effect of his rage, I say, declare his disposition, and be the equal judge whether he be an indifferent evil or a partial vice. For setting your particular affections apart, I know you will confirm mine opinion thus far, that he which you call love, and would that we honour him with a title of a god, and give him a power more than human, is no other thing than a brutal passion of the mind, derived of that part which nature hath made common to us with beasts, touching sensuality; and he which laboureth in the disease of that folly is in no other degree than he that

is possessed with the spirit of frenzy and desperation. Look in the second book of the Kings, and tell me what planet or spirit governed Amnon, the son of David, who, doting upon the beauty of his own sister, made no conscience to deflower her, and take away her chastity. Which horrible act would have procured terror to the most mortal enemy, both for the horror and detestation of the sin, and also for the honour and reverence which all men ought to give to the chastity of a maid. The prince of Shechem, being extremely enamoured upon the beauty of the daughter of Jacob, did it suffice him only to love her in honest sort? Did he stay himself upon your masked and dissimulated loyalty? No! he did that which is judged tolerable to you all, and would be common to most of you, if the rigour of the laws had you not in awe, and preferred a fear of torments and worthy punishments—he ravished her by force. Whereupon followed the ruin of himself and subversion of his people.

For end, if there be anyone amongst you that abstaineth from like violation, I think, sure, he is not stricken with the extremity of love, but that his mind hath tasted but a simple impression of that folly; seeing that he that is touched to the quick, can hardly refrain from execution of like villainies. Amongst whom, notwithstanding, I comprehend not the integrity of them whose wills tend to do honour to the holy bed of marriage without violation (for that I am persuaded those affections proceed from above and approved by God Himself), but I inveigh against their unhonest desires, who respect nothing but the pleasure in that wherein Mars and Venus strive for the mastery, at such time as Vulcan discovered their naked bodies: which I cannot term so properly in our vulgar phrase as the Frenchman includes in these three words, *Le don d'amoureuse merci;* the delight whereof decaying with the end of the act, maketh them loathe the thing wherein erst they took singular pleasure.

Here you may see also a worthy example in this master abbot, who, of a pastor and shepherd of the herd, becomes a devourer of the principal sheep of his flock; and leaving the habit and attire of religion, is invested the accoutrements of a villain and disposition of a barbarous tyrant, that hath neither knowledge of God, nor fear of His laws. Wherein my conscience would serve me to use a further discourse, touching the abuses in these hypocrites, saving that (God be praised!)

our realm is happily purged of such filth, and replenished with a plentiful crew of the undoubted and faithful ministers of God's word. Neither will I trouble my history with the sundry enormities and practices of hell which I noted in some religious houses in France, during my being there, because my theme at this time is not to treat of the abuses in their religion ; neither am I assisted with sufficient time ; for that if I should but abridge their disorders into a tenth part, the volume would exceed the bigness of the Bible. Wherefore it shall suffice me to desire God in my prayers to remove the veil of their darkness in time, lest their iniquity procure Him to thunder like desolation upon them as He did upon the children of Israel, when they forsook Him, and bowed down to images, whereof their own hands were the carpenters.

And now to the sequel of Don Gonsaldo, who, harping only upon the string of his damnable resolution, imparted the enterprise to his man, who (as you have heard) engaged his faith to be the minister of his will in what respect he thought good to employ him. And having eftsoons preferred a repetition of his promise with an assurance by oath of the uttermost he was able to do, the abbot told him that, within few days, his mistress went to perform a banquet with her father and mother out of the city. "To whom," saith he, "seeing I have forgot no experience or importunity which humanity can devise, and seeing that in the enjoying of her beauty consists the continuance or diminution of my days, I am determined to retire to the benefit of my last refuge ; which is to employ the uttermost of my forces in using her by main encounter, upon the way between the town and her father's grange in the country. Wherein, as thou hast already assured me of thy help by the oath and religion of thy faith, so thou must strain thyself to procure a further aid of such companions as thou accountest necessary to assist the expedition ; to the end that, when the matter shall be brought to the trial of force, we be not found too weak in the dispatch of our enterprise ; which, albeit may import unto thee, and such as thou shalt suborn for thy companions in this case, both a grudge of conscience, and fear to fall into the rigour of the laws, yet thou art not ignorant that the authority of my profession is sufficient to dispense and absolve the sin, and my power able to prevail above the extremity of justice in this or any other respect, of what importance soever it appear.

Neither will I stick to defray the whole plate and treasure of my abbey in defence of the quarrel against the whole state and senate of Naples."

Wherewith he dismissed his man, who with the pleasant plat of his tongue, and prodigal promises of liberal hire, was furnished immediately of his traitorous crew to betray the innocent maid; who, for her part, seeing Gonsaldo had discontinued his musters in the street, and haunt to the church where she is wont to perform her devotion, thought he had also disclaimed the vehemency of his passion, with intent no more to pursue her. Wherein as she accounted herself most free from peril, so she found an approach and offer of danger which afore she was not able to imagine.

For that the abbot, being advertised by his espials of the day and hour when the maid should go into the country, measured so rightly his time with the moment of her departure, that, some one or two hours afore, he summoneth his conspirators, and goeth out of the town, not in his friar's weed or attire of his profession, but disguised in such sort, as he was not known to any but the ministers of his intent; whom he bestowed in ambush, in an unknown covert, joining to the path by the which the goldsmith and his daughter should pass; who, thinking upon nothing but the pleasant regards which the fresh and green fields did yield, and much less imagining any secret practice or villainy conspired against them, entered with great delight into the path of their misfortune.

For near unto Naples there runneth a little river, descending from certain rocks, giving necessary moisture to the valley near the town, which the poet Sannazaro in his *Arcadia* calleth Sebetho, dividing herself into two arms hard under the walls: whereof the one, falling into certain pipes of lead, becomes serviceable by the art of man to the inhabitants of Naples; the other, stretching towards the champaign, refresheth as she passeth the meadows and cornfields adjoining, with the dew of her silver streams, and in the end, yielding tribute to the great flood, Thetis, falls with a soft noise into the sea, who receiveth her with an embracing worthy for so pleasant a neighbour. Over which river is builded a bridge, passable for horse and man, called Madeline bridge, shrouded with the branches and long sprays of certain willows, growing on either side of the brook, the commodity

of which strait, with the advantage of the place, offered themselves, as it were, to assist the enterprise of the abbot in the encounter of his pleasant enemy; who, disposed to more joy than her weary parents, went always afore them, supplying the time and tediousness of their travel with sundry pleasant devices.

And as the heat of the day, with the exercise of her body in going, had set abroach the veins of good blood through all her parts (whereby, to the pure complexion and white of her face, was added an orient dye of red), so her hair, of the colour of amber, curled by nature, and falling in locks upon her forehead, covered as then with an *escarfion* of the fashion of Piedmont, gave such an increase to her beauty, that, with the help of the shade and shadow of the trees, pavising the violence of the sun, with the glee of the pleasant stream assisting the natural white and red in her face, her eyes glistering as the clear stars in the lofty sky, made her seem nothing inferior to the perfection of her whom the poets have crowned with the title of a goddess and queen of beauty.

Wherein, if this bravery of Parolina gave great delight to the old years of her parents, who knew the arguments of youthful joy which appeared in their daughter were but recreations to mortify in them the weariness of the way, it was nothing in respect to the pleasure of Gonsaldo; who, beholding the beauty of his mistress, resembling afar off one of the nymphs, affirmed by Ovid to attend the goddess Diana going a-hunting, felt in himself a new increase or supply of desire, in such sort that if he had but the flea in his ear afore, it is now that he stands upon thorns till he have given a charge upon the prey which seems so pleasant of taste. And swearing by the god of his religion not to lose the benefit of so sweet a morsel, began to encourage his men to dispose themselves to perform the cause of their coming; warning them, notwithstanding, in special sort, to abstain from violence against the maid. "And albeit," saith he, "the father is unarmed of any weapon, saving his short wood knife, yet I am sure he will put himself in endeavour to rescue his daughter. Wherefore, whilst some are grappling with the girl, the rest may keep the old man occupied with terror and words of threatening fear." Wherewith he cried to the assault.

When immediately the ambush discovered themselves, and in a moment environed the silly maid on all parts, with

their swords drawn, offering to lay hands upon her and carry her to their master. The miserable parents seeing them at point to depart with the only pillar and prop of their old years, imagining the attempt to import an effect of great mischief, retired to the ordinary arms and defences of age, which were pitiful cries; which the villains appeased immediately with threats of present death if they would not cease their doleful bruit. And for a more terror to the silly goldsmith, some of them held the point of his sword to his throat; who, notwithstanding, kept his daughter fast in his arms. And the mother would not be dissevered from her child, desiring the traitors to discharge their cruelty upon her and give her daughter the favour of a safe liberty. But the more the desolate parents filled their ears with requests of compassion, the less pity appeared in the tyrants, and greater desire grew in the ravenous abbot.

What heart could refrain to distil drops of blood on the behalf of the desolation of these three wretched creatures; the father out of breath and half dead with the force of screeching cries; the mother equal partaker of his disaster and exceeding her husband in sorrow; the maid, more assured than her parents in the conflict of this misfortune, was at the point to use force against herself, rather than to fall into the hands of the executioners of her pudicity? I am sure never a lady of you all, reading this dolorous discourse, can abstain from terms of detestation against the infamous and disordered desire of this disciple of Satan; neither conceal the argument of compassion, seeing the virginity of this maid hanging by so slender a fillet, and ready to be offered, by compulsion, upon the alter of filthy immolation, to glut the lascivious thirst of this ravenous apostate; who, masked in a visorn and weed of simplicity, supported also by a colour of feigned devotion, studieth nothing but to prey upon the honour of widows, abuse the absence of the married man by corrupting his wife, and suborn by inorderly means to seduce the chastity of maids.

But now to our Parolina; who, as she knew the cause of this alarum to proceed of her only, and seeing the force of the assailants had committed already her parents as it were into sure ward of their power, and finding withal an impossibility in herself to resist the strength of the rest, determined to yet supply the defence of her honour with the benefit of a virtuous and valiant policy. Wherefore, changing in a moment the

amazed glee of complexion in her face into a regard of assured joy, addressed her to the abbot, with request that, afore she performed the effect of his desire, he would lend her his sword. "For no other intent," saith she, "but that my hands only may chasten the rigour of mine old father, whose crabbed age, ignorant of civility, hath been hitherto the only impediment and stay of my goodwill to yield you the hire and consideration of your love; assuring you that, upon the receipt of the first assurance of your affection towards me, I got the consent of my mother to be thankful in sort you required me. And now, if he should live, and witness the consummation of both our desires, his continual complaints would procure grievous punishment of the offence, to the open slander of us both."

Wherewith the old man giving undoubted credit to the dissimulated discourse of his daughter, the rather for that he noted no difference in her countenance and familiar conference to the abbot, cried out against the iniquity she used to his honest life passed, and present wrong she did to the virtue of his hoary years; and, not knowing the meaning or mystery of her policy, forgat no terms of reproach or rigorous rebuke against his chaste daughter. Of whose goodwill Gonsaldo being more than half assured, both for the small regard she used to the threatening words of her father, and also the flattering terms of consent by her own mouth, no less glad of the victory than if he had already passed the offer of all perils, performed the request of her who desired nothing less than the death of her father and life of the abbot. And putting his naked sword into the hand of the courageous girl, offering withal to embrace her, as though the conquest were already performed, she flung from him in great rage, willing him to retire as he made account of his life. "For," saith she, "thou counterfeit hypocrite, if thou offer eftsoons to lay thy ravenous hands upon me, thine own sword shall give the blow of deadly vengeance to the fatal course of thy cursed days."

Whereupon, she addressed her to her father, half dead of a fretting anger and purging his choleric conceits against her, told him he was not the father of a daughter that would justify the glory of his life passed with small virtue, and much less further his death by the infamous renown of her life; neither do the thing, either by accord or compulsion, that should have power to stir up the blood of shame in his face in what company soever he came. "But," saith she, "the mighty hand of God,

restoring thy weak age to a double strength, and me to a perfect skill in the use of this sword which I have conquered of our common enemy, shall defend our honour against the force of these rakehells, who seek to deprive me of the jewel of my reputation."

Wherewith, she flourished here and there, bestowing her blows with such skill to the disadvantage of her enemy, that who had seen her desperate dealing with the sword would have judged that she had been traded in the only exercise of arms all the days of her life. Which struck such sudden courage and joy into the dead heart of her old father, that he avowed his life in the honest quarrel of his daughter's chastity; and likewise the careful mother gave assistance to the magnanimity of her child, according to her feeble force; which so occupied the place for a time that the old man, and the two imps derived of the blood of the ancient Amazons, laid so hard to the charge of the monk and his soldiers that in one instant the whole ambush of traitors was out of breath.

But Gonsaldo, knowing by this last deceit of the maid that there was neither love nor friendly meaning in her, began to convey his affection into an humour of fury, commanding the sword be taken out of the hands of the new champion, with express charge, notwithstanding, to use no violence against her. Wherewith the medley grew immediately so hot on both sides, that the father, to defend the honour of his daughter, used no care to his own safeguard; and the daughter, to prevent the violence of her body, was desperate of her life. The abbot on the other side, seeing there was no way to prevent his peril but by the overthrow of his enemies, gave end to the conflict by the extremity of force, leaving the aged parents on ground maimed and half dead with the number of mortal wounds. But the daughter, lightly hurt in the arm, seeing that the want of strength would yield her prisoner at last to the enemy of her honour, thinking nothing less, notwithstanding, than to satisfy his desire anyway than by her death, used the benefit of her fortune and at unawares reached Gonsaldo a great blow thwart the face, making a bloody puddle, or baine for flies in the summer, upon the nose of master abbot.

Wherewith, holding the point of her sword in her hand, crying upon the aid of the Almighty—to Whom, according to

the shortness of her time, she commended the health of her soul—she leapt from above the bridge into the crystal waves of the clear Sebetho, choosing rather to build her tomb within the belly of some fish or monster of the sea, than to yield forcible offering of the first-fruits of her virginity to the polluted image or idol of the Synagogue of Babylon. But God, not willing as yet to deprive the world of so rare a mirror of virtue, gave her such force against the rage of the stream, that she kept breath till certain passengers, leaping into the river, recovered her with diligence of swimming, and brought her alive to the shore; deserving better the benefit of longer life than the papistical monk; who, seeing the end and success of his enterprise, retired into his abbey with his scorched face, without showing himself any more in the streets of Naples upon his stirring jennets, for the love of his lady.

The parents and the maid, after they were a little refreshed and restored to their senses in the field, were carried to the town; where every man, wondering indifferently at their virtue and valiantness in so great a peril, gave special commendation to the chastity of Parolina; for that she desired rather to die in the devouring flood than to burn quick in the scorching flames and fire of whoredom; whereunto the wickedness of the abbot had almost brought her.

And sure it is to such maids to whom we ought to erect pillars, and grave their virtue in monuments of eternity; and not to company of unperfect and foolish women, who, besides their beauty, had never anything worthy of commendation. For the respect of whose weakness, I have chiefly preferred this discourse; wherein, as they may note in this Parolina an act no less valiant than in the most assured soldier that ever bare arms, so they ought to forbear to glorify themselves in the glory of her chastity; and, by studying to imitate her virtue, to leave no force unproved which may serve to guard the honour and renown of their name, and conquer the wanton delights of the frail flesh; assuring themselves that God imparts a wonderful strength and constancy of mind to such as be chaste in deed, and the virtue of whom consisteth not only in the outward arguments, but is surely rampired within the strongest part of their heart. Like as in the mind of this; to whom, as you see, the Almighty gave force to vanquish, with main hand, the wicked enemy of her honour.

SEVENTH TALE

THE COUNTESS OF CELANT

THE ARGUMENT

If the wise men of old time found cause of cohibition in their unruly children and imps of wanton youth, I think we have double reason, in this age, to use a steady eye, both upon our daughters and such as are given us in society of wedlock. Not for that I wish the one to be kept under as servants or servile slaves; nor to take away from the other the whole scope of liberty appointed by the preferment of marriage; but exposing an indifferent and honest mean, I wish to eschew the murmur of the world, by cutting off such infinite occasions of infections as seem to offer themselves to corrupt and seduce the fragility of our youth; chiefly seeing a daily experience of so many assaults and alarums of filthy love offered to our daughters and little girls, being yet in the first flame of the fire which nature kindleth in the hearts of such as account themselves most confirmed in the year of maturity or discretion. Neither would I that either the maid or the married woman should refuse to have a bridle put to her liberty, considering it is such a guard of her quiet and honest name, with chief defence against the malice of the reproachful world, that it were better to be chained in the bottom of a dark prison, than to enjoy the benefit of the open air, being noted of such spots of infamy as commonly attend upon an inordinate liberty and licentious life. Wherein, if the desolation of so many parents, weeping in the villainy of their wives and daughters, utter ruin and subversion of so many houses, presented in stage-plays to feed the vain eyes of the reproachful multitude, argued not the number of inconveniences happening by a dissolute and libertine life, and that in the persons of diverse of our great men's daughters nowadays, we need not seem so curious in keeping this continual watch and guard, but resign such ceremonies to be practised in strange countries, where men are jealous of their own shadow, with opinion that their wives or daughters are not able to resist

the least and most simple attaint that can be offered. But where the examples are more than manifest, and the fruits of the folly burst out in open show, let us leave to allow or assize the brutal opinion of such as persuade that awe is not necessary for youth ; or that severe correction, or rather foolish pampering, breeds a dulness of wit, with impediment of the disposition of the mind or hindrance to the increase of natural gifts.

The daughters of Rome lived always within the house of their fathers, with no more liberty than was measured unto them by the eyes of their mother, and yet they were virtuous matrons in their houses, and so sufficiently instructed in civility, that I doubt the most perfect courtier we have at this day deserveth not comparison with the least of their perfections. For what other civility or example of honest life can the maids of our time learn in any company nowadays, if not to seem eloquent in prattling discourses of vain and filthy love, with words full of vain and filthy love, and enticing behaviours of an open courtesan, and sometime to make an experience of an act no less detestable, indeed, than the remembrance ought to be hateful to all honest men. Albeit, as I would not by this means procure a general inhibition of honest conference and company amongst the nobility of our country, with exercises tolerated by the prescription of liberty left unto us by our ancients ; so it is an endeavour most necessary, in mine opinion, to make a contemplation, or view, of the manners or inclination of wills, with a discretion to check such as be too froward, and make slack in some sort the rein of awful government to them that seem of more tender disposition. By the assistance of which policy, it could not be chosen but virtue should glister as greatly in the houses of great men, as rude behaviour in the cabin of the peasant or uncivil franklin ; who commonly goeth more near the discipline of the elders in nurture of their children than such as undertake to be masters of art or patterns of exquisite skill, touching the education of younglings. For which cause the wise Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, would not have his daughters brought up in the court. "For how can the nurse," saith he, "be honest herself, or impart virtue to her child, seeing nothing but practices of evil, an university of the disputation of love, with a thousand vain delights to withdraw her from well doing, or to show effects of a godly life."

But to avoid the imputation or title of a rigorous judge, which some of our ladies or gentlewomen may peradventure bestow upon me in prescribing such strait rules of their reformation, I prefer, for my only defence, the benefit of virtue ; who, I am sure, will always appear perfect as she is, both in bud and branch, in what soil soever she be planted. Wherein, as well for mine own excuse, as also to make more noble the sincerity of noble dames by the impudent life of the slippery sort of women, I have preferred this example of an Italian countess, who, so long as her first husband (not ignorant of the humour of her inclination) kept her within the view of his eye, seemed so curious of her reputation that the same only was able to plead against all the enemies of her renown ; but the veil of this free captivity was no sooner taken away by the death of her husband, but God knoweth what valiant exploits she performed. And yourselves may be judges what false grounds she gave to her own honour, with badges of infamy to him that should have governed her in her second marriage, if you will use patience in reading the discourse that followeth.

In the uttermost parts of Piedmont, is a parcel of the inheritance of the Marquis Montferrat called Casale, where dwelt, sometime, one James Scarpadon, a man more notorious in those parts by his treasure and abominable trade of usury and filthy gain, than of any reputation elsewhere by descent of parentage or monument of any virtue or godly disposition ; who, marrying a Grecian damsel of equal quality and calibre, begat of her a daughter, more fair than virtuous, less honest than was necessary, and worse disposed than well given anyway. Immediately after whose birth, the father (as one overcharged with years, and tormented with care to increase the glee of his golden coffers) renounced nature and died, bequeathing a portion of a hundred thousand ducats to his young daughter, Blanche Maria ; who, dismissing the age of infancy according to the ordinary course of times, seemed sooner ripe in years than confirmed in discretion, or able to admit the order of good government. For going on the sixteenth year of her age, albeit her doings were not void of diverse arguments of bad disposition, yet the respect for her beauty, with the enticing desire of her large portion, forced several importunities in sundry noble men and princes of the

country, in such sort as, by extreme suit and meditation of friends, she was married at last to the Viscount Ermes, son and heir of the chiefest house in Milan, who, incontinent after the marriage, carried her in great pomp to his house, leaving her mother to traffic the affairs of her usury, according to the former trade of her late husband.

This viscount, after he had practised awhile the inclination of his wife—in whom he noted more arguments of wanton and unseemly glees, with a desire of disordinate liberty, than appearance of any virtue, honest quality, or womanly behaviour—began, by little and little, to prevent the effect of so many likelihoods of peremptory ills, by putting a bridle to her wilful appetite. Wherein, notwithstanding, he seemed so precise (both to avoid the name of discourteous on his wife's behalf, and also to shun the imputation of a jealous or suspicious husband) that, without many words or reproach, either in public or secret, reprehending her fault rather by circumstance than plain discourse, he brought her at last to dismiss all desire to go abroad, with contentment, perforce, to make her only solace of the society and company which she found in his house. Wherein also, for his part, he forgat not to court and embrace her with a more continual haunt of his company than either was necessary for his health or he well able to perform; neither yet convenient to have been done, if, by such policy, he had not governed her lightness and kept her in reasonable breath.

And albeit the dames of Milan have a more scope of liberty than the rest of the ladies in any part of Italy, having by custom, as it were, certain days in the week of intercourse and meeting together, yet the endeavour of this viscount brought his wife not only in contempt with such assemblies, but also to disclaim all gossips' trade, or other fellowship, saving such as she found in the house of her husband; from whose presence she departed not for any entreaty whatsoever. Wherewith, her companions and ladies of the city, finding a lack of her company, fearing withal that the continuance of such precedent would in time prevail above their present liberty, in procuring to them all a semblable restraint from their accustomed access, suborned an old matron called Madonna Ippolita Sforza; who, broking one day with Seigneur Ermes of other affairs, asked him why he kept his wife so short, with advice in the end that he would slack

somewhat the bridle of his rigour, and enjoin her a longer line or compass of liberty, lest the world entered into murmur against him; with imagination that he either doted of her beauty or had her honesty in doubt. "For," saith she, "by keeping her in this strait mew, you bring her fragility in question, and win to yourself the title of a jealous husband."

He answered her brief demand with terms of as short discourse, observing, notwithstanding, the condition of his own estate, and quality of her that propounded the question.

"There is no man, good madam," saith he, "that speaketh not sometime that which he ought not to think. Even so what ear is privileged from hearing such things as are not true? For such as are vainly occupied in disputing at large upon my doings, are ignorant of the cause; and much less know they the disposition of my wife; whom I had rather keep captive in seemly order, than in giving leave to her liberty, to procure her dishonour, and myself just infamy. He that will keep the thing peculiar to himself which is desired of many, must neither offer it to the sale, nor suffer it to be seen but seldom; and as it is only that I am privy to mine own grief, so I am not ignorant of a medicine to restore the disease; neither am I void of discretion to govern in good sort the humours of my young wife, nor at what times I should let slip the rein that restrains the further liberty you seem to require. But where you charge me with a doubt of her honesty, blame me not if I seek to prevent that which I would not should happen. And to avoid the imputation of jealousy, I am content that henceforth she come to your house, when, and as often, and at such hours, as it shall like you to desire her company; being persuaded that the rank and reputation you hold will not brook other society or fellowship than such as agree everyway with your gravity and virtue; which only shall be her scope, with such other recreation and pleasure as she finds in my house, to the common contentment and mutual tranquillity of us both. For the rest, I wish all importunities to cease, lest they wrest me to a further rigour; for as I am hitherunto fully persuaded of her honesty, so I account it a wisdom to foresee that the use of too much liberty do not corrupt that which as yet is without spot."

Wherein truly he had great reason, and his precedent or example most worthy of imitation to such as are in like state touching the government of their wives. For to that kind of

cattle, albeit for diverse respects we ought to forbear to minister the extremity of rigour, yet let us not forget for all that to keep them somewhat short, and show ourselves worthy of the authority given us by God and nature, in exposing the rod of correction afore they come to exceed our awe, or get the bit between their teeth, without power to reclaim them by any art or policy. His prophecy also seemed fully verified in the sequel of the licentious living of his new wife ; for that, within few years after, the viscount, being served with the process of his fatal summons, gave place to the world, and yielded to the doom of his destinies ; which, after Blanche Maria had lamented with a few womanly tears, and performed the funeral ceremonies, more to defend her from murmur of the people than for respect of duty to him that was dead, she retired to Montferrat, where she also encountered the news of the death of her mother, which she digested in like sort with an ordinary dole, and repaired immediately to Casale ; where, being lady over all and subject to the controlment of none, she took such a sure taste and sipped so strongly of the cup of licentious liberty, that it bred in her an insatiable thirst of wanton and dissolute life, as you shall hear hereafter.

For her chief and common exercise there was to force a frizilation of her hair with the bodkin, converting the natural colour into a glistening glee, suborned by art to abuse God and nature ; by altering the complexion of her face by a dye of fading colours devised by policy, and that with more curiosity than the most shameless courtesan in Rome ; glancing upon everyone out of the window ; keeping private banquets in the night with a haunt of masquers with covered face ; and on the day, sitting at her gate, as a stale, to allure a stay of such as passed by the streets. There was no offer made which she did not admit, no request preferred which she did not willingly hear, nor letter sent which she did not receive and answer. This was the first earnest penny and foundation of her licentious life ; wherein she gained at last the price and chief praise from all women that ever made profession to wear the arms of Cupid or marched under the ensign of his mother Venus.

I wish the mothers and governors of little girls in our country would respect chiefly two most necessary rules in the education of their tender imps : the one, to bar all secret

conference in corners, which is the greatest corruptor of youth; the other, open and public caquet in the streets, which brings their honour in question amongst the multitude. For as the town and fortress beseiged seemeth half won, and not able to endure the force of the cannon, if she demand a parley or composition; so the ear of a woman that is open to the tale of every frivolous lover, or inclined to give the least credit to his discourse, albeit her honour and chastity be not in interest but clear from imputation of just crime, yet doth she leave a sufficient occasion to the people to dispute and scan her doings with other terms than she deserveth. For as well must we avoid the suspicion as the effect of evil, seeing the good renown is no less necessary than the honest life. And she that will be noted of integrity and sincere perfection of living, must not only avoid the act of adultery, but also the suspicion of the same. Wherefore, I wish all ladies to stand so surely upon their guard, that they neither be affected to the one, nor infected with the other; but rather, in dividing their doings into an honest mean, to do nothing in secret which shame denieth them to justify in public, nor to be the secretary of any man's vanity, or cause of the common haunt or wonder of the people, but rather to observe the policy of the serpent, who useth to stop her ears with her tail, to the end she be not infected with the noise of the charmer.

But now to our Blanche Maria, who resolved wholly in the study and exercises of love, sometime sitting in the window with a lute in her hand, sometime passing the streets with open face, more to allure the people to a gaze, than for her necessary affairs or take the open air for preserving of health, and now and then—for change of recreation—to make solemn banquets, where the presence of her parents and friends and states of gravity was not tolerable, but only the company of the carpet sect, and such as could make best court to ladies; where, amongst the rest of her ordinary haunt, she was chiefly pursued by the Lord Gismond Gonzaga, son and heir to the Duke of Mantua, and the Earl of Celant, one of the greatest reputation for honour in the dukedom of Savoy; both which, as they did their best to obtain her in marriage, omitting no means to advance their service and make them meritorious of her favour, so she made her only pastime, and took singular pleasure, in the sundry importunities of these two wooers, slenting at their sorts of devices in wooing, smiling

at their folly, carping their gesture and behaviour, and counterfeiting so artificially their amorous regards, hollow sighs, and often turns of the eye, with change of complexion and impediment of the tongue, whilst they were upon terms to obtain her good-will, that she seemed to have read no other authors, or made profession of other experience in the whole discourse of her life afore.

Seigneur Gonzaga procured the assistance of his mother-in-law, the Marquise of Montferrat, whose persuasions, with earnest suit, in short time had so summoned the widow to affection on his behalf, that the marriage was not only concluded, but at point of final consummation by order of the Church, if the Savoyard earl had not, as it were, forbidden the banns, and intercepted their resolution by fine force. For understanding that another had entered the lists, and made breach where he had given so many assaults, and at the very point to prey upon his mistress, he, using the next offer of convenient time, went to the lodging of his lady, whom he found all alone, and (as he thought) somewhat disposed to hear his discourse; which he broached unto her in these terms, with a kind of countenance and gesture arguing sufficiently the simplicity of his love:

"If I were as sure of means to relieve my distress, as I am certain to suffer the smart, I could easily dismiss my present perplexity of mind, occupied with treble doubt, the one whether I should blame myself of negligence, accuse you of rigour, good madam, or cry out for my fortune, which hitherunto hath favoured me with a vain hope of good success, and now left me to the mercy of absolute despair. For the small remorse and slender compassion which hitherto have appeared in you do argue a great wrong on your part touching the justice of my cause, seeing you have not only denied pity towards my sundry passions, but also made none account anyway of the loyal and honest love I bear you; for that you would never allow nor seem to understand any regard or other means I preferred for the advancement of the same. And yet I find a greater fault in myself in suffering another to cut the earth from under my feet, and march so far in my steps, that I have almost lost the track of the prey I chiefly desire; but above all I complain upon our common fortune that hath brought me in danger of present despair, losing the thing I justly deserve, and you in semblable peril, by

committing you to a place where your captivity shall be no less than the slaves or servile sort of Moors condemned to the mines in Portugal or India. Have you now forgot the sundry miseries you endured under the government of your late husband, Seigneur Ermes? Doth it not suffice that he kept you in the mew and, as it were, in his chamber, the space of five or six years, but that in returning to a more desolation, with exchange of that captivity for a more strait and extreme abridgment of liberty, you commit the remainder of your flourishing youth to the mercy of the Mantuans, whose heads are the common forge whereupon the humour of fretting jealousy doth always beat? Were it not better, good madam, that we, who approach near the bravery of France, enjoying a natural participation of the air and liberty of that country, should live and be resident together, than, in refusing the offer of so great a commodity, to make a second proof of the courtesy of an Italian; who is not so suspicious, as cruel, and apt to sinister conceits without just cause, and who cannot break the instinct which nature hath given him, not only to doubt of the honesty of his wife, be she never so virtuous, but also to keep her so short with strait imprisonment, that she shall neither be suffered to visit her friends abroad, nor admit any access at home?

"Besides, what will be the common bruit of the world, if not that the only awe and fear of the Lady Marquise hath forced you to marry her son-in-law? Neither will they have other opinion of your doings, but as a pupil, or one standing in awe of her tutor; wherein you abuse the liberty which the law hath given you, in suffering yourself not only to be governed, but also forced, by such as have no reason to rule you, nor authority to command you; which title, with its sequel of a thousand inconveniences and annoys, as I wish you to eschew, chiefly for the respect of your own contentment and quiet of life, so, in preventing so present and imminent a peril, dispose yourself, good lady, to embrace the gift of a better time; and imagine that fortune hath here sent her messenger, not only to present you with an offer of present pleasure, but also an assured warrant and confirmation of continual contentment, even until the extreme day and date of your life. Wherein, for my part, being void of solicitors, I am come—as you see—in person, to plead for grace on mine own behalf; preferring unto you a consideration

of the long and honest love I have borne you ; summoning your conscience also by justice not to be unthankful in the guerdon of so due a merit. You know my estate is void of necessity, or lack of any wealth ; neither are you ignorant, I am sure, of my large power and possession in Savoy : both which, as I hope, will defend me from charge or note of covetous desire, in seeking the grant of your favour. So I lay them also afore you as witnesses, to avouch thus much further on my behalf, that the only respect of your beauty, with other gifts of rare consequence in you, have stirred up my affection, with desire to do you service, and crave good-will in sort of honest and lawful marriage.

" And albeit I could yet have the assistance of a thousand other reasons to justify this much of me, yet, reposing much for myself in the integrity of my cause, I commend unto you the present view of an infeigned experience, and commit myself wholly to the indifference of your judgment. For if my passion were not vehement and my torment continual without comparison, or if my request had neither reason nor justice on its side, I had but right if I were returned with a repulse of my dissembled suit, and receive the due hire of a deceitful mind ; but seeing my demand stands upon terms of simplicity, and void of treason, importing an unfeigned effect, semblable to the dolorous regards of my complexion, and seeing, withal, I come accompanied with sincerity and undoubted intent of honest dealing, and that I cannot take day with my passion, but by the consent of your good-will, regard, I beseech you, the merit of my faith, and measure the meed according to the equity of my desert. Resolve an equal difference, good madam, between the desert of him that, under the veil of the power and authority of another, doth seek to conquer your good-will, with intent to keep you in continual captivity, and the just merit of me who, respecting only your beauty and virtue, have vowed mine honour and life to the continual contemplation of the same, with this further vow, to live and die the servant and slave of the least of your commandments. Let the vehemency of my affection, with the vow and intent of unfeigned loyalty procure you but to a just remorse and indifferent consideration of me. Regard, I beseech you, the embassador, which is love himself, who (in converting mine ancient liberty in a present captivity and awe of your beauty) hath forced also such a

vehemency of zeal in me, that, if my cause return with an effect contrary to the hope which hitherto hath only preserved me, you will come to, too late, a repentance of your cruelty, and by my death shall be witnessed the integrity and honest heart which I bare to my only mistress and most fair lady, Blanche Maria."

Who, noting the roundness of the earl, with the dolorous regards of face accompanying his complaint, gave judgment of the simplicity of his love, and renewing besides in her mind the misery of her last marriage, with the natural jealousy of all Italians, seemed not only to mislike of her rash grant to the Marquise, but also to prefer a special liking to the present offer of the Savoyard. To whom she replied that, albeit the sundry benefits of the Lady Marquise had bound her to a thankful consideration to her power, and that she was almost as loath to offend her as displease herself, yet she had not engaged her liberty so far but she reserved one point to stand herself in stead, what need soever she had.

"For in the choice of our husbands," saith she, "we ought to respect a free-will and consent of ourselves, and not to observe the appetite of another, or constrained thereunto by strangers; seeing that as the institution of God doth give them unto us for companions without separation, so it is our part to consider at large afore we resolve of the choice, to the end that, in breaking so holy a ceremony, we seem not unworthy of so sacred and high a participation. But for my part, sir, if it were not to avoid the grudge of suspicion in the wicked sort, with the partial and poisoned babble of malicious tongues, I assure you I would live without a second assay of the courtesy of another husband, protesting unto you with unfeigned vow, that if I thought that he whom my destinies have reserved for my next consort would represent, either in quality or condition, circumstance or effect, the doings of him that is dead, the veil should be broken from the instant, and the bargain revoked, what earnest or assurance soever is given of it. I thank you for your advertisement, with treble tribute for the honour you do me in desiring a composition of marriage between us, promising you in simple consideration of the same, with the small deceit and dissembled treason I note in you, the frank and free preferment of my marriage, if I happen to dispose myself that way, with addition of further power over the Lady Blanche Maria than

anyone of the world; whereof you may make as assured account as if the proof had already confirmed my words."

The earl, seeing so fair an entry, thought not convenient to let slip the benefit of so good a time, but feeding the humour of his fortune, judged it no point of good husbandry to lose his fruit after it be ripe, nor his corn for want of getting, but beating the bush as the bird was ready to go out, recharged her with second admonishment to be no less careful of his commodity than curious of her own quiet. "And seeing," saith he, "the remembrance of your plagues passed gives you reason to fear the fall of future bondage, and that the use of liberty is so dear unto you, why stick you to abandon the offer of servility, and embrace a present of the quiet you chiefly desire, or why make you conscience to condescend to that which cannot redound but to your honour and contentment? Assure me by the breath of your own mouth of the faith and loyalty of marriage, and you shall see me pursue the end and work it to effect, without offence or displeasure of any. If the fear of the Lady Marquise restrain your consent, I think you do wrong to the chief virtues whereof she is renowned; for you must imagine that she will not become such a tyrant over the will of her subjects, as to constrain the ladies of her land to marry against their minds, and much less force that which God hath left in liberty to all sorts."

Wherewith beholding an alteration of complexion in her face, with a general astonishment through all her parts, like one balancing in doubtful devices, not able to resolve a determinate judgment without the assistance of some special counsel, he took her by the hand, and kissing it with no less delight than he found singular pleasure in this argument of good success, reinforced her to a more courage, with desire not to dismay with the assault, seeing the assailant was ready to yield to her mercy. "Neither doubt to admit him to your husband," saith he, "who sweareth unto you all such duty, amity, and reverence, as belong to a husband to perform to his loyal and lawful wife; with this further confirmation of my affection towards you, that afore the consummation of the marriage by the authority of the Church, I will assign you what privilege of liberty yourself can or will devise. Do away then the fear of the Marquise, who, making neither law nor reason to enter into mislike with you, cannot nor will not reprehend you, I am sure, in making your fancy privy to the choice of

your husband; for a contract forced is a violation of the sacrament of marriage. And let not the simple and bare promise to the Lord Gonzaga (whom I know you love not) be any impediment to my request; for the vow or promise imports no effect which is procured by constraint."

Wherewith, the widow, fearing to fall eftsoons into servitude, and fully persuaded of the large offer of liberty promised by the earl, was not able to answer his importunities in other sort than with a frank consent of her faith, with confirmation by word and oath, which likewise he avouched for his part by semblable ceremonies, according to the order of contracts: wherein for a more assurance of the knot, and because the cord should not break, they wrestled a fall, the one aloft of the other, in witness of the bargain.

This first earnest penny or pleasant encounter of the earl procured him to continue his haunt, with more open and familiar access than afore; in such sort, as fame discovered immediately their secret consents, which, also, the common bruit brought to the ears of the Lady Marquise. Who, notwithstanding she had just cause of angry conceit against the widow, yet the respect of the earl, and regard to her own honour, kept her from any intent of revenge; but, swallowing a pill of patience, rather by force than order of due digestion, disposed herself also to appease the Lord Gonzaga. Who, repeating in his mind the sundry arguments of wanton and light behaviour heretofore noted in his lost widow, began to prophesy of the issue and end of his comedy, giving God thanks for his happy delivery from so inconstant a creature. Wherein he grieved also on the behalf of the unfortunate earl, that had planted his affection in so pestilent a soil, exposing even now manifest likelihoods of the dissolution of the delight he seemed to take in his new consort and wanton wife; lamenting more his rashness in the enterprise, than allowing his wisdom in the choice; for that, according to the Latin adage, he that useth more haste in the execution than counsel or device in consulting of his business, shall lack no time to repent his rashness nor leisure to do penance for his folly. And he that in the choice of his wife hath more respect to her flattering beauty than gifts of true virtue, shall easily be weary of pleasure, and hardly enjoy a continual quiet of mind: the want whereof hovered even now to overwhelm this fond earl, who, after publication of the marriage, retired with his

wife to his house amongst the mountains and craggy hills of Savoy, where he began to take counsel of his present affairs.

For that, sifting somewhat nearly the disposition of his wife, he found her attired wholly in the apparel of wanton liberty, and more apt to follow the inclination of vain and lascivious desire, than disposed to make a stay of herself in the trade of honest virtue. Wherefore, he accounted it an act of wisdom to take up the vein that fed those humours, and stop her course afore she gained the plain field. Wherein, albeit he used so steady a hand in the diet of so dangerous a creature, ministering the remedy with the consent of such convenient times and means, and in order of such simplicity and gentle dealing, that she had no great cause to note him of discourtesy, yet she became very waspish, in that he was so privy to her disposition, and forgat so soon the large privilege of the liberty which he had promised her; reprehending with bitter terms the general infidelity of men, with peculiar exclamation against the iniquity of her fortune, for that she had refused the preferment of the Lady Marquise and promise of marriage with Seigneur Gonzaga, exchanging diverse and sundry offers of honour and liberty for an irksome trade of servile life, with habitation amongst the wild deserts and barren fields of Savoy; not forgetting to reproach her husband with diverse words of spite and disdain, assuring him for end, that she would not remain long coifed and kept at commandment like a child that is appointed his times to study and hours of recreation.

But the earl, neither ignorant in the follies of women, nor void of experience to practise such kind of creatures, preferred a wonderful patience as his chiefest remedy against the rage of his wife, laying afore her notwithstanding in gentle terms the duty and endeavour of a wife towards her husband, how much and in what sort she ought to respect the honour of herself and reputation of marriage, and that as no woman ought to put in interest her honour or honest name, so, the greater she is in degree, the more heinous is her offence; and a small fault of a great lady is most mortal in the eye of the multitude, who look that the life and virtue of great ladies should serve, as it were, as a torch of clear flame to give light to the lesser companions.

"Neither is the chastity of the mind," saith he, "sufficient to confirm the perfect renown of a gentlewoman,

if the words and outward behaviour of the body not do follow the inward virtue of the heart, and the ordinary haunt and exercise give manifest declaration of that which lieth hid in the secrets of the stomach. And, for my part, I would be loath to give you cause of miscontentment, seeing that in the repose of you consists the rest of myself, and you being out of quiet, I cannot escape without grief. Seeing that, as the mutual consent of our wills and affections, with the like conjunction of marriage, hath made you the one half and second part of myself, so I expect at your hands only a simple accomplishment of that which your public oath afore God and man at the church hath bound you unto : like as also I am ready to perform unto you the uttermost of any promise or privilege whereof at any time I have made protestation, with full assurance from this present of every part of the same, so that you give me the due respect of a husband. For as the head, being the chief and principal part of the rest of the members, hath, as it were, a special authority by nature to govern the whole mass and remainder of the body, so the woman, being the inferior part of her husband, is subject to all dutiful obedience on his behalf, and bound to honour him with no worse terms than by the name of lord and master. For in omitting your duty towards him you abuse the virtue of your vow, approved by solemn oath, and in incensing his dishonour you are guilty of the violation and breach of wedlock.

" One chief oversight I note in you is for that upon small causes you force great complaints, which argueth the rather the idleness of your brain. For the mind that is occupied with vanity is forgetful of all things saving such as the instigation of pleasure and folly do prefer to her remembrance ; whereon the contrary part, the spirit affected to virtue exposeth always fruits according to so great a gift, dissimulating her passions with words of wisdom, and, in knowing much, giveth notwithstanding a show of an honest and moderate ignorance. And she that laboureth in a passion of particular conceits, with detestation of the due respect of honour, cannot study other works than such as seem to favour her folly, nor open her ears to any voice, if the same agree not to the complot and contentment of her fancy. Wherein, as I hope, you will either pardon me by justice, or at least excuse my simplicity. For that, as your late terms of reproach have

forced me to such a plainness, so, for end, if you will renounce your trade of former folly, and from henceforth retire to an orderly conformity of life, you shall not only procure a singular pleasure to me, but cause an absolute contentment with continual quiet to yourself: whereof be careful as you think good."

Here the earl had great reason and double policy in seeking to reform the abuses in his wife without the assistance of cruelty or constraint; for that such dispositions are rather reduced by fair entreaty, than reclaimed by fear or force of torments, according to the nature of diverse of the insensible creatures. For the fierce elephant stands not in awe of his keeper by force of any stripes, but is made tractable to bend his large body whilst he mounts upon his back, by certain familiar voices and strokings of his keeper, wherewith he overcometh the natural rudeness and cruelty of the beast. The tiger will take food at the hands of the wildman nourished in the caves and desert habitations amongst them, where no stripes, nor other awe of man, can move any moderation to his woodness or cruel nature: so, likewise, some women, albeit they are quite divested of all honour or honesty, yet they are found to retain some sparks of civil humanity, being more easily brought to a reformation by gentle order, than reclaimed by the smart of any torture or cruelty. Wherein, notwithstanding, this countess seemed to use a more extremity, and exceed the doings of any that ever have been noted of disorder that way; for neither gentle persuasions could allure her, nor fear nor force reduce her to reconcilement or amendment of life, but according to the stone of Scilicia, upon which the more you beat to bruise or break it in pieces, the greater hardness is driven into it, so the greater endeavour the earl used to persuade his wife, either by allurement or offer of correction, the more perversity he found in her, with less hope of amendment. And as she used a malicious silence during the discourse of his exhortation, so she forced in herself for the present a wonderful patience; to the end that, with the consent of a more convenient time, she might spit out the poison which she shrouded secretly under the wing of her venomous stomach.

Whereby, for a first proof of her cunning in the part she meant to play, she forgat not to dissimulate her passion and counterfeit the simple hypocrite, in such sort as a wiser man

than the earl might easily have been taken in the snare of her deceit; which, notwithstanding, she used in such covert manner, that, within short time, she had not only removed all conceits of evil from the head of her husband, but also brought him to an opinion of a marvellous honesty and assured confidence in her. In which good vein, and for a more declaration of his good mind towards her, he observed her fancy so far forth as upon a sudden he broke up house in Savoy and went to Casale, where lay her inheritance and chief possession.

If you mark well the fetch of this woman in procuring her husband to depart his country, and what a sudden check followed to him, with a false bound to the honour of herself, you may easily judge, that a woman once bent and resolved to do evil, hath a wit to imagine all malice and sorts of mischief to be ministers in the execution of her wickedness; and that neither fear of punishment, imputation of shame, peril, nor danger, how mortal soever they appear, can stay her from performing the end of her damnable device. Whereof the tragedy of Medea, and folly of the friend of Theseus, argueth sufficiently their tickle constancy in virtue, and great zeal and desire to do things contrary to all honesty. Neither doth the eagle, soaring in the air, convey herself to so high a gait by the force and flight of her wings, as the vain conceits and imaginations of a woman, governed by her own opinion, fill her full of devices of iniquity, with desire and means to perform the effect of any evil. Wherein, as I touch only such as, having made open sale of their honour, are not worthy eftsoons to challenge their place amongst the society of chaste and virtuous dames, so I hope the same is sufficient to procure my excuse amongst the crew of honest ladies and gentlewomen; the rather for that the publication and deciphering of the just infamy of the corrupted sort giveth a greater show of your glory, and makes your honour and virtue of more reputation. Neither would I be noted in this place of malice to move question of them, whose lives and doings everyway are full of integrity, nor use any partial adulation or flattery in the behalf of such as be notorious of evil in the eye of all the world; but, in making an indifferent division of the deserts of every degree, to give to either sort his peculiar title, neither concealing the corruption and villainy of the one, nor carping the virtue and just renown of the other.

Whereof I leave the judgment and my excuse in balance amongst you chaste dames—who, I am sure, do wish no less a discovery and punishment of the faults of others, than yourselves a just increase of glory and name of reputation for ever—and return now to the pursuit of our Countess of Celant; who, dandling her husband at Casale, with a glee of masked friendship, kissing and cherishing him, after a Judas order, who embraced her unfeignedly from the bottom of his heart, adding eftsoons a fresh remembrance to his late discourtesy, with a vehement desire to satisfy the glut of her filthy lust. Wherein she accounted the presence and company of the count a special impediment, seeing that, so long as she was with him, it was impossible to water her garden with other pot than that which she detested no less than the offer of poison, determined to give present remedy, and put herself in free liberty, by a secret sleight and stealing away from her husband.

Wherein, for a first beginning or sure foundation of this device, she levied by secret means a great sum of money, which she put in bank to run in interest to her use, reserving a thousand ducats to supply her necessary turn till the day of receipt of the usury or hire of her bank. Wherewith, in the only company of two or three servants which were secretaries of her device, she taketh the advantage of a fair night, when the clearness of the moon and stars favoured the diligence of the vagabonds, and fleeth to Pavia, a town subject to the state and dukedom of Milan; where she hired one of the fairest lodgings in the town, whose windows opened all upon the street, with certain back-doors to receive a secret messenger, a shop most necessary for her trade, and which also she forgat not to deck and trim up with fair beds, rich hangings, and other accoutrements of glee, more to allure a repair of guests than either seemly or necessary to her estate.

I leave you to judge what *tintamarre* entered the head of the earl by the sudden and secret departure of his wife, and I ask this question: How many of you would have raised the hue and cry, or dispatched any messengers for the recovery of so great a loss? I avouch thus much on behalf of the earl, that, at the first noise and bruit of the accident, he did not only enter into terms of inordinate rage, with intent to raise the whole country, but also was ready to pursue the chase in person. Albeit, after the fury of his storm was retired,

giving place to the instigation of reason, and that he had compared the present effect and fact of his wife with the former circumstance and arguments of licentious desire in her, he rather gave thanks to his fortune for her friendship, than entered into tears or sorrow for the absence of so lewd a guest. And seeing her departure had discharged his head of a great deal of care, he determined not only to use no impediment to her liberty, but also not to offer himself anyway to recover her, whose absence imported an assurance of future quiet and contentment during the remainder or rest of his age.

"He that is assured," saith he, "of the malice of his enemy, hath small cause to fear his force; for that he is warned to stand upon his guard against all doubt or distrust of reason; but such is in treble danger, as embraceth in his arms a mortal enemy in the habit and attire of an assured friend, and, trusting to the smiling regards of the cockatrice, doth not eschew the peril, till she have won the place to shoot forth her sting of mischief. If my wife had taken longer days in dissimulating her malice, my peril had increased with the ignorance of her wicked intent; where now, I am not only privy to her whole disposition, but happily rid of so deceitful a friend and secret enemy; who, no doubt, would not only have slandered my bed with unlawful adultery, but, in defiling her hands with my blood, would one day have made no conscience to cut my throat, or furthered my death otherways, by some of her ruffians or coherents of iniquity. I am content with this indifferent penance and punishment due to me by right, for the extreme love I bare her, without further desire that the breath and presence of so pestilent an infection may eftsoons pollute the worst corner in my house. Let her go, and rate her pleasure at what interest she thinks good; for this so late and familiar experience shall suffice not only to instruct, but also warn me, to beware of such deceitful and counterfeit images."

And proceeding still with terms of complaint, he concluded that the honour of a man did neither depend, nor was anyway defaced, by the disorder or dishonesty of his wicked wife; chiefly where such abuse is derived rather of a corrupt inclination of herself than any discourtesy or unseemly dealing on his part. His passion forced him to exclaim against all sorts of women, sparing neither state nor degree of that sex, against whom he seemed to inveigh rather by transport than

consent of reason ; and without all regard or remembrance of anyone of the infinite number of honest ladies, whose simplicity and upright order of life do not only defend themselves from the sting of any reproach, but also discovereth the villainy of such as abandon their honour without respect to honest shame, which, as a companion most familiar, ought to govern and direct the doings of all women.

But now let us resort to Pavia, and visit the doings of Blanche Maria, whose renown in short time became of no less bruit in all the corners and coasts of Italy, than the Corinthian Lais through all parts of Asia, being withal so prodigal of her liberty, with open and unseemly means to make herself known to the world, that in the very view and first beginning of her trade appeared infallible arguments of future evils, with a disordered sequel of life. Albeit she seemed to reserve a certain majesty and semblance of respect to her estate, for that she would not march but under ensigns of nobility, refusing either to be seen or spoken to of persons of meaner condition : which delicate and coy order she seemed to prefer, rather to set a greater price of her merchandise—according to the Grecian courtesan, whom the orator refused for that he would not buy his repentance at so high a rate—than to argue any diminution of her lascivious desire.

For her eye had no sooner encountered any young and lusty gentleman that seemed sufficiently set forth with furniture of nature, and able everyway to perform the expectation of her appetite, but her countenance and other outward behaviour were ready to make declaration of her inward desire, roving upon him without respect, with such glee and liberal regards, that he need no interpreter to decipher her meaning, nor physician to disclose the mystery of her disease : neither was she anything inferior to Madonna Messalina, the Roman princess, saving that she haunted the bank and common places, and this performed her exploits in her own house ; the Roman put no difference between carters and men of greater calling, and this demi-Greek preyed only upon nobility and imps of tender years. Wherein albeit she seemed more delicate of taste than the other, yet she exceeded all the bankrupts of honour that ever were in this one point, that she was always rather weary of travail than at any time satisfied with pleasure, resembling a bottomless gulf, receiving all that is put into it, without casting anything up again.

This was the chaste life which this good lady led, after she had got the bit between her teeth and the rein of liberty within her own hand.

Whereby you may judge whether the Milanese or first husband had reason to refrain her forward inclination in the first flame of her youth, seeing that as the green osier or sallow of two or three years' growth is always more pliable than the great oak, seasoned either by policy or confirmed in hardness by the continuance of many years, so it is necessary we keep an awful hand upon such younglings as appear sooner ripe in appetite than in government or discretion ; to the end that, in plying the wax whilst the water is warm, we may always frame them to the postey of our minds, having them to supply the necessity of our affairs. And as the cunning grafter, foreseeing the destruction of his stock, by the too much forwardness of the twigs, and certain little branches sucking up the moisture and sap which should feed the rest of the tree, doth cut them away, to the end the principal boughs may flourish and receive their natural nurture ; so it is not sufficient to minister correction to youth in their tender years, if we reserve not a continuation of awe to accompany their increase and ripeness of their age, to prevent the harms we see ordinarily happen by maturity and too much forwardness in desire to be free from controlment.

As she was in these exercises at Pavia, continuing a train of servants, according to her trade and study, it chanced that the Earl of Messina, called Ardizzino Valpergo, came to the service of the emperor, by which occasion he retired to Pavia, and lodged in the palace of his brother there. He was young, lusty, and given to all exercises of activity ; of seemly stature, with proportion of limbs accordingly, saving that he halted somewhat of one leg, by reason of a hurt he received in a skirmish of war, diminishing notwithstanding no part of his perfection or shape of body ; who, using one special recreation in passing up and down the streets, beheld diverse times the beauty of the countess, sitting now and then in a window, giving only a show of her face, and sometime would walk up and down in a gallery or low hall, presenting the whole view of her body. And to draw the stranger to a more desire to behold her, she would sometime appear in brave attire at the porch or gate of her palace, specially at such time as the earl made his walk that way ; who, being already galled with the arrows of love on her behalf, pursued his quest with such

devotion and diligence that he conquered at last a convenient time and means to speak to her.

Wherein, albeit, he preferred but a simple proffer of his service with other slight discourses, wherewith the courtier or other gentleman of behaviour doth commonly feed the time, whilst he is in the company of ladies, and that the great majesty which she used would not suffer him at the first to give right judgment of this masked goddess, yet he saw well enough that he needed not the whole strength of the emperor's camp to force the place : the which he judged neither to be so strongly flanked, nor surely rampired, but the valiant soldier, being furnished to gave the charge with the spear in the rest, might make an entry without great peril ; chiefly for that the trenches thrown down, and breach already made, the place was sufficiently assaultable for any mean soldier. At which he forgat not to convert to the commodity and advantage of his desire, together with the consent of convenient time and Fortune, who placed them one day all alone, without any access of company to her chamber, where he forgat not to prefer his request—with terms of humility, according to the vain order of such idle persons as abuse the gift of time in pleading for grace in cases of love—with a frank offer of his body and living, with commission to dispose of them all as she thought good.

"Wherein, good madam," saith he, "it is not the summons of any sinister conceit or evil opinion which hath moved me to board you so far, but rather the vehement instigation of love, forcing me to such an affectioned zeal on your behalf, that I should do indifferent wrong to the estimation of your honour and injury to the vow of my loyal service sworn unto you long since, if I seem yet to prolong a concealment of that which the present view of your beauty hath set abroach and committed to open flame. Wherefore, if my present offer, with respect of former merit, lack force to wrest a simple grant of favour at your hand, yet imagine, good lady, that in forfeiting the pawn which I have preferred for the performance of my promise, I hazard also the violation of the faith and life of a gentleman ; whereof I yield you eftsoons a second confirmation by the height and authority of the skies, to be more careful to obey you and live in the continual awe of your commandment, than curious of mine own health and safety ; with this addition, not to spare at any

time to employ my carcass with all that I have in the defence of your causes, what condition or quality soever they import."

The subtle countess, albeit she knew well enough that the fire was not so kindled in the stomach of the earl as it pleased him to set a face and feigned show of his passion, and that the large scope of liberty in his tongue, with assurance and constancy in his countenance, argued rather a dissembled zeal than a true transport of affection in his heart; yet, seeing him young, lusty, and sufficient everyway to answer and discharge the combat of her greedy desire, determined not to let slip the offer of so fit a prey, which she thought would suffice to occupy the place, till she had found another to enter the lists and supply his lack. Wherewith she passed a plain grant of her favour under these covert terms:

"Like as, Seigneur Valpergo, I am not ignorant in the ordinary deceits of men, declared specially on the behalf of such as, reposing too much credit in their honesty, do give slender guard of themselves, so I can (I thank God) content myself to smile at their follies, and take recreation to hear the bravery of their requests, seeming to burn in the desire of love, when indeed they are not only far from such passion, but free from intent to perform any effect of true loyalty; seeming also to interlard their importunities with a double vehemency, when they go most busily about to make a prey of our beauty and fragility. Whereof, albeit, I account you not only one of the number, but also no less disloyal than any of the rest, yet, respecting the reputation of your race, I am content to give credit to your words, and accept your offer in such sort as you have promised; reposing so much for myself in your discretion that there shall appear in you no want of anything that belongeth to the government and wise convey of such secret affairs; wherein, if I find an effect of my expectation, yourself shall judge of my liberality in returning the merit of your honest friendship."

Wherewith the alteration and breach of countenance in her face argued a present trouble and contrariety of mind within her, which the earl construing to proceed of a desire she had to move him to dismiss all further delays and dispose himself to the execution of the thing so indifferently desired of them both, put diligence to the thankful offer of time and fortune, in such sort as, embracing her with a thousand sorts of kisses, he forgat all ceremonies and circumstances, and gave

her checkmate, without any odds, upon a low bed or pallet, covered close with a veil or canopy of crimson velvet, fringed with silver thrum : where was such indifferent liking on both parts, that they resolved at the instant of other times and hours to meet at the shock in so pleasant a skirmish. Wherein as she judged him able enough to pass the musters for such respects, determining to make store of him till fortune furnished her of a fresh supply, so, for his part, he found her so delicate on his behalf, that he resigned the authority which governed him and his doings to the order and direction of her, in such sort as he spake nothing but by the mouth of Blanche Maria, nor did anything wherein her counsel and commandment bare not the greatest sway ; being so drowned in the desire of his beastly trull, and blinded with the veil of filthy love, that both day and night were indifferent for the exercise of his pleasure ; making her bed his private lodging and delicate arms his place of pleasant exercise and trial of activity, with continual abode there ; and that with such public signs and declaration of his disordered living, that, to the confirmation of the common bruit which passed of their follies, there lacked but some Plautus or Terence to prefer it in public stage in the hearing of all the world.

But what ? Is it like that she that had falsed her faith to a husband, more honest and virtuous than she deserved, would content herself with the company of this young earl. Or who doubts but such indifferent women as have committed their bodies to the general service of the world, are no less inconstant in their love, than void of shame in divesting them of honest virtue to undertake so bad a kind of life ? Neither do they like so well of anything as often change of diet to satisfy their insatiable and beastly lust, seeming as it were a champion or challenger, ready to answer all comers. For a familiar proof whereof, I commit you to the experience of this ravenous she-wolf, Blanche Maria, who, seeing her new minion so surely limed with the blush of her beauty, that only a simple beck was sufficient to command him, taught him a new cross-caper, with a thousand tricks and sleights in vaulting. Wherewith, also, adding a further experience to his blind simplicity, she brought him now and then to the honour of holding the mule at the door whilst another man rode her errand in the chamber. Which traffic was not without great peril on his part, for that, as the Count Celant was born to

bear the badge of Cornwall in the form of a second Actaeon, so this young prince was ordained by destiny to lose his life, with expectation of all that he attended by the service of kings or foreign princes, by the wicked treason of a pernicious and common whore.

For in this intercourse of her love with Seigneur Valpergo, and very heat of the amorous glees between them, Fortune, watching to enter the stage, and make seen that her mobility differeth little or nothing from the disposition and uncertainty of a woman—according to the meaning of the poets, which have set her forth, in shape, attire, and colours, like to one of that sex—gave him an inkling of the inconstancy of his mistress. Whereupon followed a little diminution and restraint of his company from her; who, being wholly transformed into the form of an unreasonable creature, delighting in nothing but to run riot and hunt for change of pasture, had her eyes and mind more given to gluttony than her stomach able to brook the sundry choice and sorts of diet, employing herself wholly to gather new soldiers to supply the lack of the old garrison and weary captain.

Wherein she was assisted with more than a necessary expedition: for that, within some eighteen or twenty days after Valpergo had taken possession and entered the fort of the countess, there arrived at Pavia Seigneur Sanseverino, Earl of Gaiazo, whose promptness of wit and perfection of body and members, with a valiant courage of the heart, as they made his name and renown exceed all others between that and the Mounts, so this disloyal Alcina and cruel Medea had no sooner taken a simple view on him with a flickering glance of her uncertain eye, but she felt a motion of vehement zeal stir and kindle within her; which, within short time, grew to terms of such certain affection, that she which erst had dallied with all men, becomes now to dote upon this new earl; and that in such sort that, if fortune would not award present compassion, and love lend her a speedy means to recover the object of her desire, she seemed not only to enter the torments of despair, but also to make small account of the use of longer life, judging by the exterior and outward promises of this young lord, that it was only he that seemed sufficient to quench the thirst of her greedy appetite.

Wherefore she began to dispatch her hands of her first friend Valpergo, with whom from that instant she did not only

refuse to speak, but also, shunning all places of his presence and repair, would not stick sometime to shut her gates against him, which he could not digest without certain injurious words and terms of reproach. Whereupon she grounded a grudge of such mortal enmity and spite against him, that her mind retained a remembrance of the quarrel till her malice had procured his death (whereof the discourse followeth in its place), desiring, as it seemed, the acquaintance of the Earl Gaiazo, as well for her assistance in the execution of the effect of her present spite against Valpergo, as for the respect of true affection.

Wherein as she was hotly called upon by two earnest solicitors, love and revenge, the one suing for a consummation of her wicked device, the other pricking her with desire to procure the effect of her new affection with the second earl, to whom, albeit she displayed such manifest signs of good-will as either the art of love could imagine or her wanton and idle brain devise, yet, seeing so slender a reply on his part, with an increase of her burning appetite, she thought it necessary to put spurs to his dull disposition, making no conscience to become the shameless client in a cause, wherein the most vile and simple woman that is, suffereth herself to be sued unto with no small ado. Wherein, being void of means to use mutual conference, she makes this little letter the messenger of her unseemly request :

" The respect of the place and estimation which I hold, sir, I am sure will put you in some amaze at the first view of these lines and undoubted messengers of my heart ; seeing that, in preferring the lewd suggestion of my unruly fancy afore the due regard and consideration of modesty which ought to accompany all ladies of honour, I make request of that whose simple remembrance makes me blush at so great an abuse. But if you consider the commission of love, who summoneth rather by commandment than request, with such a general awe over all estates, and peculiar authority to punish us women with vehemency of affection in desiring the things which nature hath forbidden us to attempt, you will not only dispense with my rash folly, but dispose yourself to take away, or at least diminish, the greatness of my present passion ; which, as it was founded at first upon the general fame of your virtues, so the often view of your rare perfection

of person since your repair to Pavia, hath forced such an increase of zeal, with aggravation of my desire, that if my destiny deny me a speedy supply of relief, or fortune forbid you to come and visit my longing estate, your cruelty shall mortify my passion and give end to my life altogether. Wherein, seeing love hath favoured you with the victory and conquest of her who erst had power to vanquish all men, show yourself no less willing to embrace the benefit than worth of the glory, and defer not, sir, to expose effects of pity on the behalf of her who liveth only under the merit of a simple hope ; which if the return of your resolution do make frustrate, and convert my desire into air, the same shall also pronounce the fatal end of the unhappy, and your most loyal,

BLANCHE MARIA."

This embassage, with further commission by the mouth of the bringer, stirred up no small alteration in the mind of the young earl ; chiefly for that he saw himself pursued with a frank offer of that which (if the affectioned zeal he bare to his dear friend and companion the Lord Valpergo had not stayed the attempt) he had sought long since to obtain. And albeit he judged it neither tolerable by humanity, nor the office of a gentleman, to supplant the pleasure of his friend and march in the steps of his prey, yet, being charmed as it were with the vehement words of the letter, with opinion that the discourtesy were too great to abuse the liberal offer of so fair a lady, gave place to the summons, and went immediately to her house ; where, finding her void of all company in her bed-chamber, saw small occasion to prefer half the circumstance and courtlike wooing which Seigneur Valpergo used ; for that both the one and the other, after certain enticing kisses and other drawing allurements performed on both parts, disposed themselves to make present sacrifice to the goddess of love, in putting an effect to the thing which they both thirsted to accomplish with equality of desire.

Which amorous practice continued between them certain months, in such sort, that the earl was so assotted, and became so idolatrous on her behalf, that he performed no devotion to other saint, saving the unseemly shrine of his new minion ; who, also, seeing him stand in water to the chin, and wholly subject to the yoke of her awe, determined to keep a hard

hand of the bridle, with intent to make him the bloody executioner of her detestable device against her former lover Valpergo ; whose felicity defended him either from the peril of that imagination, or else God would not yet give leave to her wickedness, for that her hope was deceived touching any help of assistance of her new friend. For Valpergo, seeing himself not only dispossessed of the love of his lady, but dishonoured by her mouth with diverse words of reproach in his absence, judged it no grudge of conscience to minister semblable revenge on her behalf, the rather for that she was both the author of the evil, first breaker of her faith without cause, and now the beginner of the quarrel of slander.

Wherefore, departing from Pavia, he painted her dishonesty upon every post he passed by, blazing her arms with such base and vile colours, and in such liberal sort, that every company which he haunted was partaker of the renown he gave to Blanche Maria ; who, hearing at last what estimation she was in through all Lombardy by the report of Valpergo, began to enter into terms of rage, finding a great difficulty to digest the ingratitude of her lost lover—whose doings, notwithstanding, she allowed sometimes by justice, and saw some reason in his revenge, for that her inorderly dealing opened the first way to his discourtesy—and by and by flattered herself with a vain imagination that men were born to bear what impositions soever such triflers as she would lay upon them ; and that, seeing they were but servants, they did right to endure and take in good part anything said or done by their mistress. Albeit, feeding still of her malicious choler, with a certain secret desire of vengeance, she determined at last to return his discourtesy with no less interest than the loss of his life, with resolution to procure the speedy effect by the hand of him whom she presumed to have so much at commandment that a simple request of her mouth would make him the minister of that.

Behold ! with what impudence and rage this tigress goeth about to arm one friend against another ; and that it could not suffice to abuse herself towards them both in the filthy use of her body, but that, with intent to murder the one, she puts in hazard the equal destruction of them both, confirming her abominable adultery with manslaughter and wilful murder, a sin most heinous of all others afore God and man. Wherein, as her fretting mind could admit neither

quiet nor contentment till her eyes were witnesses of the effect of her device, or at least she had put her intent upon terms to him whom she meant to make the bloody butcher of her beastly will; so, attending the offer of convenient time and place, she was assisted so far forth, that one night as they were in bed together, and in the chiefest delight of their pleasant exercise, she burst suddenly into vehement tears, with sighs and other signs of dolour; in such sort that, with the counterfeit alarums which inward sorrow seemed to minister and set abroach, her passion appeared so mortal that her ignorant bedfellow, thinking her soul and body to be at point to make present separation the one from the other, enquired the cause of her grief, with addition that if it came by displeasure or wrong done to her by any man, his hands only should give the revenge, with absolute contentment to herself hereafter.

Wherewith, using the advangates of his promise, wherein she accounted a sufficiency to procure the end of her enemy, she told him, that as nature had given a certain facility to the vile and base sort of people to bear and brook the offer of any injury, so there was nothing more contrary to the condition of the noble mind, than to be touched with such villainy as puts the honour in interest or the renown upon terms of public infamy.

"I say thus much, sir," saith she, wetting his face with the dew of her watery eyes, "for that the Lord Valpergo, who enjoyed, I cannot deny, the like friendship I show unto you, hath not had shame to blab of his doings, slandering me with no worse terms of infamy than if I were the most infected strumpet that ever abandoned her body to the mariners and rascal crew along the coasts of Sicily. If he had but made a simple vaunt of the favours he found in me, with participation but to his friends, my honour had been but in question where now it is past all doubt. Besides, if he had not added injurious words to his indecent slander, and made common market tale of the thing which ought to be kept most secret, I could have digested the evil with an ordinary patience. Wherefore, seeing the heinous causes of my grief import a special justice and reason of revenge, let not the enemy of the honour of your dear Blanche Maria escape without punishment; but, in accounting the wrong which I sustain indifferent to us both, to bind me by the benefit of this revenge to a more affectioned zeal towards you, with an assured loyalty even until the

extreme dissolution of my natural days. Otherways, if he live in the triumph of my slander, what cause have I to joy in life, or comfort to expose the best part in me, for the contentment and pleasure of you who stayeth to do me reason to so manifest a wrong ? "

Here the young earl felt himself double passioned whether he should perform the expectation of his venomous basilisk, whom he loved without measure, or abstain from violation of the innocent blood of his friend, whom the law of friendship forbad him anyway to abuse. Albeit, to appease the present rage of the countess, he promised an effect of her desire, with speedy punishment of him, " who is not worthy anyway," saith he, " to serve you but in thought," feeding her humour with frank words, dissimulating, notwithstanding, that which he thought on the behalf of the Lord Valpergo, whose honesty he knew to be without malice, and that his discretion and wisdom would not suffer him to stir up any sinister report without great occasion on her part. Besides, he considered that the justice of the quarrel rested in him, for that he had taken the prey as it were out of his mouth ; albeit by her procurement, and that after the other had discontinued his haunt and course of repair thither. Wherewith, examining the circumstances at large, he found the cause far insufficient to move any breach of friendship between them ; but determining to continue the league, he contented her with a dissembled promise, and restored in the meantime the exercise of their former pleasure.

Wherein he passed certain months without the tender of any quarrel to the Lord Valpergo, who, returned by this time to Pavia, enjoyed a mutual conversation with the Earl Sanseverino, with such indifferent familiarity that for the most part they used but one bed and one board, with one purse common between them both ; which was not unmarked of the malicious Blanche Maria, who, seeing so many fit occasions, with the offer of convenient time and place, assisting the execution of her execrable device, with provocation to the earl to perform his promise, gave judgment of the case as it was, that her wickedness was not able to force an enmity between the two lords, and that the Earl Gaiazo did but keep her in breath with fair words only to continue the glut of his pleasure which he took of her. Wherefore, disdaining so great an abuse in him whom above all men she reserved as the

chief pillar of her trust, she determined to make a second experience of the same means which served her turn in the dispatch of her first friend.

Wherein, she omitted neither occasion nor expedition, for as often as he came to her house, she was either sick or troubled with other business that she could not keep him company, not letting sometime to shut her gates against him. All which because she saw lacked force to make him refrain, she retired to the assistance of policy, desiring him with simple and cold terms to do her so much honour as to forbear from henceforth all access to her house, for that she was in mind to return to her husband, with whom the effect of atonement was already wrought by certain of her friends; who (being upon the way to fetch her home) she would not by any means should find her in the attire of a courtesan or woman making love.

"Besides, sir," saith she, not without some dissembled tears, "I feel a remorse of conscience on the behalf of the long abuse I have used towards him, and that albeit my offence, proceeding of my folly, seems not altogether worthy of free pardon, yet it may appear in some sort excusable; for he that confesseth his fault giveth great argument of amendment, and restoreth the trespass to sufficient recompense; desiring you for end, to have no less consideration of my present case, than heretofore you have found no want of good-will in me to satisfy the respect of your pleasure at all times." Wherewith (to prefer a more credit to her suborned discourse) she promised him a continuation of favour, with assurance of unfeigned good-will, so long as nature was content to lend her the use of life.

The earl, whether he gave faith to her feigned words or dissembled a credit for the nonce, yet he seemed to persuade a truth in the matter; for that, from the hour of such conference, he checked the humour of his accustomed desire, using exquisite medicines to mortify that blind affection which so long had kept him in captivity in the bottomless gulf of his Piedmont. And because he would as well remove the cause as take away the disease, fearing lest either the view of her presence, or some force of new charm, might eftsoons enchant him and set abroach the humour of former desires, he retired immediately to Milan. He feared also the fall of some sudden mischief; chiefly for that he had sufficient experience of the

cursed disposition of this viper, whose heart was so infected with the poisoned air of every sin, that, being weary of the exercise of whoredom, she would make no conscience to furnish the stage with unnatural murders.

For what expectation of other fruit is in them whose minds are clean despoiled of virtue, if not such as are allowed by the guide and wicked spirit that governeth their diabolical disposition; or who is ignorant of tyranny of a woman converted wholly into the appetite of rage and revenge? Neither is her cruelty inferior to the devouring monster, and exceeds everyway the brutish inclination of the barbarous sort of creatures; whose rage, albeit, now and then procureth them to use force against the natural procreation and fruits of their own wombs, yet they do stay to commit any kind of cruelty to such as have trafficked with them in the trade of licentious lust, accounting no greater sacrilege or profanation of the law and ceremonies due to their goddess, than to pollute their hands with the blood of such as erst have supplied the lust of their sensual pleasure. Wherein, if they which had no knowledge of God nor feared the devil, and void altogether of discipline and experience in humanity, reserved a certain honour and respect to nature, why should there be either free dispense or toleration of punishment to the wretches of our age, who, notwithstanding the daily use of the law, written by the very finger of God and revealed unto us by His prophets and apostles, with diverse threatening inhibitions noted in the infallible Book, do not fear to offend the majesty of the Highest, not only in staining their souls with the spot of adultery, but also in dyeing the earth with the blood of their brethren and fellows in Christ: wherein this history shall present you with sufficient proof for this time?

The Lord Gaiazo had no sooner left Pavia than this infernal goddess began to attempt the recovery of her first lover Valpergo: wherein notwithstanding there appeared an equality of doubt and difficulty, chiefly for that she feared that he that last left her had deciphered her intent, with revelation of the means she had devised to procure his death. But what enterprise is it that he dare not attempt whose mind is the bondman and slave of sin? Wherein, albeit the beginning seem to import a certain difficulty, for that the soul preferreth a resistance, and the conscience wavering is moved to a remorse and remembrance of repentance, yet when a man

is already become old in sin, and the heart environed with the branches of iniquity, the wicked hath a more facility in the execution of mischief, than he that is good able to keep the renown of virtue: even so when youth is nourished in impudence, and age divested of honest shame, there is no peril can make the one afraid, nor imputation of reproach give cause to the other to blush.

Like as this impudent Piedmontese, renewing the traffic of her ancient wickedness, practised so far with the familiars and friends of him whose death (as you heard) she erst conspired by malice, excusing herself so amply by embassages and letters of vehement persuasion, that he was content to hear in what sort she was able to purge herself. Wherein her justification was the sooner admitted for that the judge was not only partial on her behalf, but rather inclined to foolish pity than disposed to enjoin just penance. She promised by protestation of faith and religious oath, not only to become his subject and slave so long as her soul was carried about upon the mortal chariot of her body, but also gave him at the instant a pawn of her life with all that she had, for the performance of her last promise. Here was the peace eftsoons concluded between the wicked countess and unhappy earl, whose articles were registered and seals put to the night following, when the Lord Valpergo was restored to the possession of the fortress which erst was revolted, and lived long under the awe of another prince.

Wherein, as they thus renewed the round of their amorous dance, the one finding a more scope of liberty under her recovered lover than afore, the other resolved wholly to observe the appetite of his lady, behold! a second desire of blood and suggestion of murder appearing eftsoons in the face of this Megaera; who, cropping altogether the herb of revenge, longed now for the destruction of him who (as you heard) promised to do sacrifice on the body which presently she embraced and held in most estimation. Whereof, if she had been demanded the cause, I think she could have given no other reason of her malice than that, delighting in bloody enterprises, she accounted it a principal virtue to commit mischiefs of greatest detestation; for the which notwithstanding the reward of murder was thundered upon her at last, with a shameful and miserable end to herself and untimely death of him who, as the first companion and next neighbour

to her folly, with equal participation of filthy pleasure, reposed too much trust in the villainy of her who preferred vice afore virtue, and took pleasure in the device of bloody affairs; whereof you shall have the discourse at large in the last act of this history.

Blanche Maria, seeing her so rampired in the heart of Valpergo, that her only word was current to command him, determined to prefer him to the office of a murderer upon the person of him who erst refused the charge. Wherein, adding an expedition to her device, one night being in bed together, after she had embraced and feasted him frankly with the filthy follies of love, wherein she had more than sufficient experience, she discontinued her kisses with a sudden silence, and drawing her treason afar off, told him that it is long since she had to present him with one request of special favour; wherein, because she doubted either to move his displeasure, or receive a repulse, she hath not only deferred to be importunate, but stayed to declare the cause; "which," saith she, "although it touch you no less than the safeguard of your life, and unworthy infamy to your dear Blanche Maria, yet is the respect of your favour of such authority with me, that I had rather use silence, with your friendship and contentment, than be the author of the thing that should incense you to anger."

He gave her not only liberty to make her demand, but assurance for his part, to perform the effect at what price soever it were. "For," saith he, "if the matter import any peril to me, it behoveth me to use care of my life, but if the honour of you be abused or yourself distressed, you cannot imagine the diligence I will put to the revenge of your wrong, and undertake all your quarrels. Wherefore doubt not, good lady, to employ him who liveth but to serve you, and is ready to die to do you pleasure."

Here she asked him of the friendship between the Earl Gaiazo and him, and what assurance he had of his loyalty.

"Such experience," saith he, "as nothing is able to dissolve our amity. For I would not stand to be entreated to offer my body to present danger to remove his peril, nor he, I am sure, would make any conscience to redeem my extremity with the hazard of his own life. Neither do we use other than a common conversation of all things between us. But now to the cause of your question."

Wherewith the traitress, seeing sufficient words passed in circumstance, thought now time to broach a vent for her poison, wherefore kissing him in more amorous sort than ever he felt himself embraced afore, she told him the points wherein he was deceived touching the trust he seemed to repose in his friend. "For," saith she, "you are not so constant and assured on his behalf as he full of villainy in dissembling the malice which he hath of long hatched under the wing of his deceitful heart. And to use a simple plainness in so sure a case, you have cause to give none other judgment of him than as your most cruel and capital enemy in all the world. Wherein because I will not press you to be credulous of a dream, nor move you to believe anything whose author is not of sufficient authority, you shall understand that he avouched no less than I have reported by the breath of his own mouth, at such time as he practised with me in your late absence, with this addition, that he should never enjoy a perfect quiet of mind nor taste of the benefit of assured rest or repose, till his hands had made morsels of your body and divided all your parts into small pieces; confirming at the same instant his bloody resolution by the oath of the honour and life of a gentleman, that, within the compass of no long time, he would bid you to such a banquet that you should not need any longer to be careful of the world, not mindful to make love to ladies.

"Wherein he seemed so resolute and grounded in his malice, that (notwithstanding all the persuasions I could prefer) I could never wrest from him the original or cause of this mortal grudge. And albeit at that time I was entered into terms of choler against you, with more justice to further his spite than reason to prevent your peril or show favour in the saving of your life, yet the remembrance of our ancient love (as a virtue but half mortified or dead in me) moved me to such a remorse on your behalf, that I did not only the uttermost of my endeavour to remove the veil of his intent, but also desired him with tears to desist from such enterprise, whilst I was in place where you abode; for that I could not endure the view of your injury, and much less see you distressed to death, without the speedy sacrifice of mine own life. Whereunto he gave not only a deaf ear, but bound him eftsoons to his former protestation by a second oath, that either his dead carcass in the place should witness his good-will, or else he would deliver the world of the Lord Valpergo. All

which I had no means, as then, to impart unto you, by reason of your absence and small access you had hither.

"Wherein, sir, seeing since then your felicity hath defended you from danger and consummation of his intent, so now I beseech you not only to stand upon your guard in defending his malice, but also to prevent his pernicious resolution with an act of equal courtesy; for it is more wisdom to take away the life of your enemy, than, in giving place to his malice, to commit your body to the mercy of his murdering hand. Besides, it is no breach of virtue to requite the intent of injury with an effect of equal revenge, and your wisdom should be of greater estimation, and his treason more heinous (for that he hath first abused and broken the law of friendship), in dressing such mortal ambushes against so dear a friend. Wherein, for my part, as I have discovered the whole conspiracy under a frank report of an unfeigned truth, so, being no less careful of your safety than curious of mine own life, weighing them both in the balance of indifferent zeal, I wish you to follow my advice in preventing so imminent a danger; and, for a more assurance of your safety, to offer the assault to him that hath already sworn your destruction. Wherein also you shall perform the virtue of a valiant knight, with full satisfaction of the desire of her whom you cannot so amply gratify, if you presented her with the free gift of the best dukedom in Italy. And now shall I see an effect of the love you bear me, who eftsoons desireth not you to suffer him to live any longer that triumpheth without measure in the unworthy slander of your most affectionate Blanche Maria."

If the last words of this foolish lady had not brought her whole request in suspicion, her importunities peradventure had procured a consent in the earl; who, comparing the points of her discourse with her vehemency in persuading, found, indeed, that her chiefest meaning tended to the defence of her own quarrel. Whereupon, he entered into a pause, measuring in the secret of his mind the terms of her present malice with experience and diverse profits of the fidelity of his friend, whom he knew to be more assured in virtue than to imagine so great a villainy against him. And albeit he knew it was but a fetch of his lady to sow the seeds of quarrel between the Earl Gaiazo and him, yet, to flatter her fond humour for the time, he promised to become the minister of her cursed will; for a more show and expedition whereof, he

took his leave and repaired immediately to Milan, where he imparted to the Lord Gaiazo every point and article of the venomous discourse of the countess, her conclusion and burning desire of his absolute destruction, with special suit that only his hands might be the shameful executioners of her execrable device.

Wherewith the Earl Gaiazo was no less astonied than he had cause. For, comparing the terms of his present report with a fresh remembrance of a former conspiracy—by his hands—touching the death of him whom she had now suborned to procure the destruction of himself, he cried out of the iniquity of the gods in suffering the earth to be infected with the breath of so wicked a woman, and exclaimed against nature in that she did not abridge the course of life in so horrible a monster, "whose pestilent air," saith he, "if God defend not His people, is able to corrupt a whole country. Oh! how justly hath God visited the sins of her father for his cursed usuries upon his wretched daughter, and rightly punished the villainies of her predecessors in an imp sprung of so vile a stock. How is it possible to make a froward kite a forward hawk to the river, or the butcher's cur to draw a true scent to the hurt deer? Likewise this pattern of corruption—being the daughter of a villain, who was born to no more portion than seven foot of inheritance in the churchyard, and her mother more fair than chaste, and less virtuous than honest—hath not only abandoned her country and husband for the glut of her insatiable lust, answering all comers without exception in the single combat of her beastly desire, but also is come to keep an open butchery or slaughter-house to execute the nobility of Italy.

"But for my part, if it were not for the dishonour that would attend me in defiling my hands with the blood of such a filth, I assure you I would draw her by the hair to the public theatre or place of execution in Milan; where, after she had confessed how often, and in what sort, she hath desired me with her hands closed and eyes full of dissembling tears, regarding the majesty of the heavens, to commit murder upon my dear Valpergo, these hands should divide her villainous carcass into more pieces than there be days in the year. And, besides, I was never of so vile or base condition but that I durst discover and avouch what grudge soever I had conceived against any man: neither do I think that you have other

opinion of me than to be one of your most loyal and assured friends."

Whereunto the other replied that the only respect of the fidelity he reposed in him kept him from performing her pernicious and bloody summons, and that he had not only disclaimed her acquaintance, and company also, but abandoned the place of her being, for fear of further enchantment. "And seeing," saith he, "that God hath holden His holy hand over us, and our fortune hitherunto defended us from danger, let the view of our peril passed withstand the offer of future mischief, and in eschewing the air of such infection let us also from henceforth dismiss our devotion to that imp and image of Satan. Had it not been a great commendation to us to have entered unto quarrel and committed mutual slaughter one of another, for the recreation and pleasure of such a minion; whose simple remembrance, I assure you, is so hateful unto me at this present that I find a fault in myself that in bidding her farewell I gave her not an hundred estockados through the body, to the end the example and due hire of her bad life might procure a terror to others that thirst after the blood of such unnatural murders? Albeit, as the course of her wretched life argueth an unhappy end, so I doubt not but her miserable death will take sufficient revenge of the wrong she hath offered to us both. In the meantime I wish in us both an utter forgetfulness of her and her follies. And, seeing the gain she hath got by us may be couched in the least corner of her coffers, we have small cause to grieve in any loss, saving in the impairing of our reputation for yielding honour to one so far unworthy of our company."

Wherewith ended the discourse between the two young lords, who ever after forgat not to continue the remembrance of their venomous basilisk with words of open infamy in what company soever they were; both what enticing means she had to train men to her lure, and with what subtleties she dismissed them being weary of their company, or when she saw an offer of fresh supply. The bruit whereof, albeit gave her certain fretting alarums at the stomach, yet nature had lent her such a grace, that she neither blushed at the same nor was moved to remorse with the view of her evil, but digested both the one and the other with an ordinary face of shameless complexion. Wherein, notwithstanding, she was neither so precise nor constant but the inward gripes she felt had almost

forced a deprivation of liberty and senses, the rather with a view of an Italian epigram inveighing bitterly against her disordered life, composed as they said by the Earl Valpergo, which, because I never saw nor have means to recover a true copy, I leave without judgment or report: but thus much I dare avouch of her choleric passion, proceeding chiefly by that invective, that if she had had either captain or soldiers at her commandment she had made two fair anatomies of both their bodies. Whereof, notwithstanding, Seigneur Valpergo escaped not without sharp penance, as one upon whom she founded her greatest grudge; for that, as he was the first that skirmished with her, hand to hand, in her close chamber, so he was the last to break his faith and dissembled the effect of his promise.

By this time every post and postern in Pavia was painted with pamphlets, written in prose and verse, of the bountiful life of the countess, every comedy and stage-play babbled of her vicious trade, the bells rung of her inordinate lust, and the birds in the air cried out against her, in such sort that she did not only refrain to come abroad, and show herself either in the street or window, but imagining that the change of air and place would take away the blasphemous noise of the bruit, trussed up her baggage and departed by moon-light, without sound of trumpet, from Pavia to Milan; where, as she was first invested with robes of honour by marriage with the Viscount Ermes, so her destinies seemed to reserve that place as a witness and theatre of her degradation, not only of honour but also of life.

For she had not long sojourned at Milan but there arrived a captain, with a charge of certain troops of horsemen, called Don Pietro di Cardona, a Sicilian born, and bastard brother of the Earl of Collisano, whose father, dying at the battle fought at Bicocca, left him no other portion nor revenue but such as he gat by the entertainment of the wars.

His age exceeded not twenty or twenty-one years. Somewhat swarthy of complexion, and melancholic in the regard of his countenance, with a scar or hurt in the face, lent him by chance in a fray, but, for the rest, sufficiently furnished with good proportion. Who made his chief exercise to pass up and down the streets; where, glancing now and then upon this alluring image of Venus, took no time to debate the matter at large, but upon the sudden became extremely in love with

her ; in such sort as he entered into device to have familiar conference and make an offer of his service unto her, who, better experienced in the trade of love than he, albeit she saw him young and able enough to answer the combat of her lust, yet, to stir up a more vehemency of love and give herself a greater incorporation in his heart, she lured him by piecemeal till she had sufficiently manned him, and framed him by the measure of her own will.

For if this young pigeon of the first plume chanced to espy her out of the window, yielding her reverence with a sigh according to the vain Spaniard, she would not stick to requite him with a countenance of semblable courtesy, and suddenly shut the casement and withdraw herself from his sight, leaving the silly captain tiring upon a taste of pleasure, interlarded also with a desperate hope never to enjoy her otherways than in secret and uncertain wishes. And albeit he was of sufficient experience to train and lead his men with courage enough in the field, yet seemed he no less void of skill than far from audacity, and so ignorant in the pursuit of this quest, as if he had never made court to any lady of reputation or honour ; which forced the rather a vehemency of his torment on the behalf of his new mistress, whose majesty and coy estate, keeping always within her palace, as it argued a certain degree of honour, so the same gave also a greater increase to his passion with intent to do her all honour he could.

For besides that he passed by her gate every day in great bravery of change of horse and apparel, with his men mustering about him and other pomp of a captain, making his horse make good the *toto pomado* with other lofty turns above ground, when he came against the window that yielded the first view and prospect of her beauty ; yet, for a further declaration of his affectioned service, he walked one evening along the palace of his lady, with a noise of soft music to procure her to come to the window ; when himself took a treble lute and gave her a good-night, in a song no less doleful in note and tune than of desperate substance, with such store of sighs and regards of pity in his face, that who had seen his ghastly countenance at that time would have judged him to be served with the last process and sentence definitive of his life, or that he had made love to one of the blood royal in Spain.

In the end of which mourning music, Don Pietro, as one out of hope to recover any one jot of favour of his mistress, being upon his departure and retire to his lodging, was requested to come in by one of her women ; who, opening the gate, conveyed him along through a fair garden into a large gallery, hung on either side with sundry sorts of pictures and tables of love and folly, where the countess did not only give him great thanks for the honour he did her with his solemn music, but also yielded him such other choice of familiar courtesy that he seemed rather astonied with the presence of the place he so much desired, than able to bestow any thanks or other simple show of duty upon his new goddess ; who, seeing his simplicity, thought it was now time to stop the lure upon him, and give him some assurance by words and effect, as well as she had trained him so far by arguments of outward glee. Wherefore, taking him by the hand, she led him to a low bed furnished with green satin. where, being set together, she used this short order of collation unto him :

" Albeit, sir, the show of my present courtesy may stir up in you some cause of sinister suspicion, the rather for that, having no other knowledge nor assurance of your honest behaviour than a simple report of your name and nobility, I have given you credit to enter my house at so indecent an hour ; yet, being in some part excused by the liberty of our country, which exceeds the strait inhibition of the ladies in Spain and Sicily, I am also to defeat all sorts of imputation that way by the special regard of honour I have always used on the behalf of strangers ; towards whom, as I was never a niggard of my liberality, specially when they do me that honour to visit my house, so for your part, for that I find no cause as yet either to disclaim or discontinue my accustomed bounty from you, I am content to assure you no less welcome than any man that ever had access hither; with commission that the door being ready to be opened at what hour soever you knock, you may be bold to dispose of me and mine no less frankly than if the property of all that I have rested in yourself."

Which entertainment, as it was unlooked for of Seigneur Pietro, so the liberal offer of his mistress took away the passion of his dumb trance, and not only restored him again to the liberty of his speech, but also reinforced him with a new courage to

put his request upon terms and make a tender of his service ; with protestation that, if she would pass a grant of her good-will, and admit him for her secret servant and friend, he would use such endeavour to make declaration of the dutiful zeal he bare her, that she should find him nothing inferior to any gentleman that ever made profession of love or other service to his lady, nor have cause anyway to mislike her choice ; for that he would never be so rash in promise as ready to expose an effect, nor she so willing to require as he twice diligent to perform the uttermost of her commandments.

She, feeling herself clawed in the place that itched most, replied with a smiling countenance, that " the experience of the often breach of promise in such as use to court us simple ladies with the merchandise of love, doth argue so much the inconstancy of man," saith she, " that, for my part, if I saw a present effect of true loyalty before mine eyes, yet could I hardly be brought to repose either credit or assurance in any promise ; seeing men themselves nowadays are infected with the air of such fragility that they neither respect the honesty of their word, nor the virtue in performing the least effect of a thousand liberal offers they make at unawares. Albeit, as he that chargeth the guiltless with the offence of the murderer doth wrong to his innocency, so I have learned that it is a special virtue to be partial in opinion toward strangers, and judge the best of every man. Wherefore, for your part, sir, if you will enlarge the offer of your first faith with this addition, that I may be bold to employ you in one special affair of mine at such time as I shall summon you thereunto, I am content not only to put you in possession of your request, but also to bind myself to no less loyalty on your behalf than ever appeared in any lady towards her faithful servant."

The captain, that would willingly have sacrificed himself for the ransom of her favour, stood not to examine what charge she would enjoin him unto, but confirmed an assurance with sundry sorts of oaths ; being no less rash in the promise of evil than hasty to perform the execution, as hereafter you shall hear. Here was brewed the broth or preparative of the fatal obsequies of her former love, and the earnest penny given of the bloody bargain and death of Seigneur Valpergo.

For she, by the too liberal and unhonest vent of her honour, made him the *bourreau* and unnatural executioner of noble blood, defacing by the same means the gentry of his

house, which he ought to have preserved till the last drop of blood in his body. And remaining there all that night, she made him so pleasant a banquet of delicate kisses and other exercises of the bed, that the more he tasted of the pleasure the more he thirsted with desire to continue the sport; and the subtle Circe, for her part, seemed so vehement in love, with dissimulated arguments of unfeigned affection, that, in persuading himself of the victory of her good-will, he thought he had made a conquest of the whole east part of the world; seeming so drowned in the devotion of his new saint, and charmed with the enchantments of her art—which, peradventure, lent her some power or assistance of legerdemain to force his humour of earnest zeal—that if she had said the word he had made no conscience to have committed the whole city of Milan to the mercy of fire and gunpowder, like as Blosius of Cumae was ready to put fire into all parts of the city of Rome if the seditious Tiberius Gracchus had given it him in charge.

Such is the rage and frantic folly of youth when they suffer their amorous transport to exceed the career of reason or discretion, and from this fountain have distilled heretofore many destructions of realms with subversions and alterations of monarchies. Wherein also may be noted a marvellous corrupt and vain disposition in such as will rather effect and haunt the company of a public courtesan than honour the virtue of a chaste lady, although she were his lawful wife and companion of bed. And yet those gallants will not stick to jest and point at the married man, governed sometime by the sage advice of his lawful wife, when they seem ready at the commandment of a strumpet or arrant whore, not only to hazard the price of their honour, but also, in favouring the instigation of her wickedness, to make their testament upon a scaffold, laying their heads under the edge of the sword of justice.

Wherein I need not turn over many books for copy of examples, seeing you may be sufficiently satisfied with the view of the folly of this bastard of Cardona in performing the suggestion and malice of this murdering countess; who, seeing her captain sufficiently framed to the postey of her will, thought it was now time to put him in remembrance of his promise and summon him to the revenge of them that thought no more of her conspiracies nor trains of treason. Wherein as the hour approached that her lascivious trade of life should be

enjoined to open penance, and the wrong and violation of faith to her husband, with her pernicious intents and effects of murders, receive their due hire and punishment ; and that the rage of destiny would not be appeased till some man were committed to execution ; so, for a more expedition of the fatal end of her miserable life, she enticed her bastard lover into a close arbour in the garden, where only the birds were witness of their discourse, and brake with him in this sort :

" If nature, sir, hath given to everyone a special care to hold the use of life most dear, with a peculiar desire to favour the course of our days with so long a term as we can, how much more are we bound to embrace and be careful of that which causeth us to live with a singular renown from amongst the rest of the baser sort of people ; who, lying always in watch to mark our order of living, are no less glad to have an occasion of slander than ready to impart it to all the world ; with such partiality of unworthy bruit, that the greater we seem in degree, the more heinous they make our offence and mortal faults, not only scarce noted, but also tolerable, in meaner personages ? Wherein as we women are most incident to the awe of that malicious climate of people—both for that they sift us and our doings more narrowly than the rest, and because we, being the weaker company, are not armed with sufficient force to resist their rage—so the indifferent sort ought not to be rash in judgment on their sides, nor give sentence of discredit or dishonesty against us, the rather by a sinister suggestion of such a vulgar and barbarous crew ; neither ought we to spare or fear any sort of revenge which may advance the recovery of that whereof we are wrongfully divested.

" Thus much I have inferred, sir, as a preamble to the request I mean to make ; which, I take God to witness, proceeds not so much of desire to pursue the revenge of wrong I have already received, as to make known to all the world with what integrity I go about to preserve the renown of my former reputation ; knowing right well that the earth beareth nothing so precious or of so great value that is able to restore or make good the forfeiture of the honour of a lady of equal calibre and calling to me. And because I will not keep you in long suspense, nor with tedious circumstance move any mislike to him that hath offered to justify my cause against them whose wickedness have procured these terms of just complaint, it may like you to understand this :

"As, not long since, I remained at Pavia with a train convenient for my degree, maintaining court and hospitality in such sort that the greatest estate seemed content with mine ordinary, so, amongst the rest of the repair and access to my house, I was visited with an often haunt of two earls of equal nobility and semblable descent of honour; to whom, albeit, I used an indifferent countenance exposing no greater argument of familiarity on their behalf than (as you see) I show to every gentleman, yet, forgetting the estimation of their own race, and rank which I hold, they have seemed of late so unthankful to the honour I used towards them, that I find a return of the merit of my courtesy with a general bruit of open slander, begun and continued by them, who also cease not as yet to endeavour to make my name no less notorious of infamy, than if I were the most common courtesan in Rome or Venice.

"Wherein, as the virtue of my innocency is able to satisfy the opinions of such as know me—for that the integrity of my life hitherunto persuades them that I am both belied by malice and slandered without cause—so all strangers, and specially the vulgar sort, comparing my delicate and brave order of living with pernicious rumour of these gallants, doubt not to confirm their villainies with an absolute judgment that I am no less dishonest indeed than their bruit hath published in every corner and country of Italy. Whereof, besides that mine own conscience doth absolve me, yet dare I plead and appeal to the testimony of yourself to depose the contrary, protesting unto you by the height of the highest Throne in Heaven, that only you have vanquished the chastity of Blanche Maria; who, if she should anyway lose your presence, could not enjoy the air of Milan four and twenty hours, for that those roisterers and slanderous earls have brought me in so bad a taste amongst all honest company; and yet would I not depart without a revenge of the wrong they have done me. Wherein, if I cannot be assisted with the help of any man, I assure you this carcass shall either be found dead in the enterprise, or these hands shall commit the fatal execution of these corrupt wretches whose malice have set abroach the vessel of unworthy slander to mine honour and estimation."

Wherewith she forced a sudden complexion of dolour in her face, in such sort that the tears which distilled from her

eyes dropped all amongst her cheeks and breasts of the colour of the azured alabaster, and watered the whole bosom and body of the Sicilian.. Who, having no other god but the countess, and seeing the impetuosity of her distress, enquired of her in a marvellous rage what he was that durst abuse her who had at commandment a captain, with his whole ensign of men-at-arms and soldiers, ready to march at the sound of her drum to defend her quarrel and take vengeance of such as oppress her ; swearing at the instant by the faith and honour of a soldier, that if he knew the names of these impudent wretches, all the world should procure no dispense of their death, and he only would cut them in as many pieces as there be members of their wicked bodies. "Wherefore," saith he, embracing his infernal goddess, "give me only a note of their names, and you shall see what difference I use between doing and saying, simple words and deeds of effect ; and do away these tears, without further remembrance or care to revenge your enemies, for you shall see that I will tonse them so cunningly, that hereafter they shall need no barber to round their hair."

This frank promise, with the likelihood of speedy effect, breathed such a fresh air of consolation into the murdering countess, that after she had culled and embraced him in a thousand sorts, with an offer and liberal dedication of her life, with all that she had, even until the last and extreme drop of her blood, told him the names of her enemies ; "who," saith she, "are not able to make good anyway the forfeiture of mine honour but by their death and peremptory destruction." Wherewith he willed her eftsoons to dismiss all care and repose herself upon him. "For," saith he, "afore the expiration of many days, you shall hear such news as you long for."

Wherein he failed neither of the time nor effect of his promise ; for that the next night he was advertised by certain espials, which he had set for the purpose, that the Earl Valpergo supped in the town. Wherefore he armed himself with twenty men-at-arms of his soldiers, and lay in ambush of either side of the street where the earl should pass in his return to his lodging ; who, with his brother, arm in arm, with some five or six of their pages and servants, between ten and eleven of the clock in the evening, came devising together till they were at the jamb or turn of a street that stretcheth to Saint Jacques ; where suddenly they saw

themselves assailed and set upon on all sides with men in armour. And finding their force far too weak to maintain skirmish with so great a troop, armed at all points up to the throat, and they only the simple assistance of the rapier and cloak, began to flee. But they found a stop of passage at every place; in such sort as the earl and his brother, with the rest of their small crew, were cut in pieces in one instant.

Albeit, as murder is the sin most detestable afore God, so we see few or none escape unpunished, nor any done in such secret but the majesty of the Highest reserves a means to discover it. For in the heat of this sharp medley the Earl Ardizzino espied the bastard Pietro, whom he named and called upon many times, but all in vain. Which, being heard and avouched by one of the townsmen, standing rather in his window to cry aim than helping anyway to part the fray, was the cause that he was taken the same night and committed to prison by the authority of the Duke of Bourbon, lieutenant and chief governor within Milan for the Emperor Charles the Fifth. And the next day, fearing the offer of the rack and other torments, he confessed the fact, with the cause, to proceed of the sinister subornation of the Countess Blanche Maria, whose life and trade, according to the discourse you have already heard, he imparted at large to the Duke and rest of the council.

She, being advertised of the whole, had time and liberty to flee; but God Which is just would not that her wickedness should be assisted with any longer date; seeing that if she had lived her malice would also have raged upon the Earl Gaiazo, who by good chance was at that time out of the town. The next day she was sent into another prison in the town, to avoid conference between Don Pietro and her. Whereof there was more cause of fear than needed; for that upon the first examination she confessed the whole conspiracy, trusting, belike, in I cannot tell how many of her thousand crowns, wherewith she hoped to corrupt the governor or such as bare authority under him. Wherein her expectation was no less frustrated than her destinies seemed weary to favour her with longer life—for the offer of her crowns was hateful to the upright ministers of justice, and other means of mediation had no place in the senate—for that she was judged to be taken out of prison the second day

after the murder, and lose her head in the place of public execution.

In the meanwhile, the captains of the army purchased the life of the bastard of Cardona, and sent him with divers letters of commendation to the emperor; who, for the respect of his experience and practice in war, advanced him to a charge convenient for his skill.

And albeit the last arrest and sentence definitive of the miserable countess was communicated unto her to the end she might put herself in readiness to pass the dreadful journey of death, yet, seeming to repose much for herself in the assistance of her coffers, she neither dismayed at the news nor disposed herself anyway towards God, until the sergeants criminal, taking her out of her dungeon in the castle, led her to the fatal theatre in the market place, where was erected a fair scaffold to play the last act of her tragedy upon. There the wretched lady entered into open confession of her faults and former life in the hearing of the multitude, desiring God upon her knees, with great effusion of tears, not to deal with her according to her deserts, but that she might enjoy the benefit of His mercy; and that He would not argue against her, for if He judged her according to her iniquities she was not able to abide it. And so, desiring the people to prefer their prayers on her behalf, for her better assistance of the spirit of grace in her perilous passage which she had to perform, she renounced nature by the deadly blow of the sword of execution, which took away the head from the pernicious body of her who in her life never found any wickedness which she did not only embrace, but exceed with imitation and increase with further villainy, nor was acquainted with any virtue which she did not abuse or convert into an aggravation of sin.

A goodly example, sure, for the youth in our time, seeing that the greatest part, lancing indifferently into the gulf of all abomination, are governed only by the transport of their vain and foolish conceits, without having respect to the sundry mischiefs and impositions of shame which fail not to attend the end of such exercises. For if the Lord of Cardona had not been rescued by the assistance of a good fortune, and taken out of the hands of distress by special aid of the other captains, it may be easily judged what misery had thundered upon him by giving himself in prey to the flattering

appetite of a light and foolish woman ; who seemed to yield him more glee or favour for the satisfying of her own lust and to perform her malicious device, than for any respect for loyalty or true love, indifferent care of his honour, or honest regard to her own estimation.

And truly as his misfortune is great that bestoweth his affection upon a whore—for that he is incident to a thousand inconveniences—so his folly is no less that persuades himself to be beloved of a common dory ; seeing their amity continueth no longer than they reap either pleasure or profit, neither are they so inconstant in love as void of measure in imagination of mischiefs. Wherein, for that our plentiful time yields us choice of examples and sort of familiar experience, I am content to abridge the justification at this time ; for that to maintain continual argument of murders, or affairs full of peril, is often hurtful to the quiet mind, desiring sometime a pleasant recreation from affliction, no less than the pilot or weary mariner covets a present calm and appeasement of angry Æolus, after they have been long forwearied in contending against the malice of their fortune, among the perilous straits of the unquiet ocean.

And albeit the corruption of our own nature is so great that we take more delight to hear a discourse or beadroll of follies than in reports interlarded with admonitions full of reason and wisdom; yet am I persuaded that such as have their minds tipped with virtue cannot be so perverse, nor void of good disposition, as the other wretches, whose lives, bearing the badge of infamy, make them also sequestrated from the rest of the good sort. Wherein we ought to be fully resolved that there is no history (how full of pleasant delight soever it appear) which yields not withal wholesome instructions to direct our lives ; neither ought we to be so scrupulous or full of curiosity as either to condemn or mislike the pleasant comedy for that it is not painted with the serenity of the Stoics ; seeing the volumes of profane records and Scripture itself do note unto us the lives of sundry vicious persons : not for that we should enter into terms of grudge against the report of such ancient antiquity, nor dispose ourselves to the imitation of the like vices, but rather in viewing the strange and grievous punishment which ordinarily hath overwhelmed such sin, to learn and labour to direct our lives by the contrary of their examples : which is one respect that made me put

my pen in exercise to prefer this history to our vulgar tongue : to the end, also, that the frail youth of our country, that follow the damnable path of iniquity, may see how sure they are to feel the heavy hand of God, Who blesseth the good sort with a plentiful gift of His grace, and punisheth the wicked with sundry sorts of affliction.

EIGHTH TALE

A MODERN LUCRETIA

THE ARGUMENT

We should not need so much the assistance of foreign records, nor report of ancient histories exceeding the compass of our age and memory, if we were as careful to note the accidents of our own time as we seem curious in admiration of rare things, whose glorious antiquity with partiality of fame sets a more price of the endeavour of others than their diligence and doings deserve by justice. Like as the Greeks and Romans, painting with an exquisite dexterity of the pen their policy in war, the valiantness of their captains, their wonderful fortune and good success in all enterprises, with other discourses of their virtues, do argue them more glorious in their own acts than meritorious indeed of true commendation ; for that, in arrogating unto themselves the only title and name of all knowledge, they make our time seem naked of all virtue, saving such as is derived from them and imputation of their doings. Albeit, we may object with the Spartan against the Athenians, that those lip-wise soldiers, or school orators, had a more facility in discovering, than facility in execution of, noble effects. Not for that I mean to do such wrong to their estimation as not to yield to them a title of singularity in all perfections ; yet I may also be bold to prefer the benefit of our time ; which, participating with their golden age in any respect of honest gift or quality, is able to present a furniture of as many examples and authorities of virtue as we read were found in the politic state of Rome, when Cato, Camilla, or Scipio governed that proud city, or when one Pericles, Themistocles, or Aristides bare authority in the flourishing Academia of Athens. For if we go about to discourse of the valiantness in arms, or study to be privy to the sleights and policy in war, we need not the assistance of one Hannibal, discipline of Marius, policy of Pompeius, nor courage of Cæsar or Alexander, seeing our fertile Europe brings forth such store of excellent captains, that, if those great conquerors and subverters of

whole countries amongst the Greeks and Romans were now in the field with their invincible force, they should not find a Metellus or Gauls without arms, nor encounter a company of effeminate Persians, or have to do with fearful Italians, but they should buckle with the valiant cavalry and gendarmery of France, feel the force of the courageous Englishmen, make a proof of the puissance of the mighty Almain, and make head against the arms of the lofty Spaniard.

Wherein, as the shortness of time denieth me to yield every captain and soldier his peculiar commendation, so my endeavour could not escape without imputation of superfluity, if I should interlard my catalogue of the gracious gifts of our time with the due glory of the fathers of justice, devising wonderful policies and necessary laws for regard of the public weal in the senate ; wherein our world I think oweth nothing to antiquity. Neither need I prefer the singularity and exquisite skill of our painters, or forgers of curious images ; whose art at this day contends with the ancient cunning of Apelles. Albeit, upon the commendations of these dexterities in arms and arts concerning the hands, I find attending a worthy cause of general complaint against the slothfulness of our time, giving withal the title of just praise to the diligence of the ancients, who, preserving the memory of such as deserved renown amongst them for any virtue, hath left us cause to blush in our own abuses, and be ashamed of the negligence we use in recording the rarities of our time, or perfections of such as are justly meritorious of praise. And albeit of long time the iniquity of the bad sort of men have so much prevailed over the worthy renown of virtuous women, that they have not sticked to whet their malicious tongues with diverse blasphemous reproaches against such as by misfortune have given some false bound to their honour, yet ought we not to be unthankful to the chastity and honest conversation of the rest ; who, rather than they would depart with the badge of their pudicity, have been seen with their bodies full of wounds, and faces dyed with blood, and sometime passed the pangs of painful death in resisting the force and fleshly villainy of the wicked corrupters of their virginity.

Wherein if the Greeks have given such great commendation to the fair Hippo, who, being made a prey, amongst other spoils of the country, to a barbarous pirate on the sea, with present danger to depart with the badge of her honour, chose

rather to bury her body in the belly of some fish, and consecrate her integrity to the waves, than suffer an infidel palliard to hurt her soul to the death, in depriving her of that which all the world are not able to restore or make good; if the Boeotians have not forgot to engrave in pillars of eternity the memory of a lady in Thebes, who, forced to the violation of her body by a rude soldier of the King of the Macedonians, dissimulated for the time her distress with feigned shows that she delighted in the pleasure, till, encountering at last a convenient occasion, she revenged the wrong done to her honour with the death of him that has used such force against her—where, also, herself, loathing the use of longer years, having already lost the only joy and felicity of life, gave place to nature, and at the instant made a bloody sacrifice of herself by her own hands; and if the Romans have had always in their mouth the praise of Lucrece, whose chastity they have placed in the theatre or circle of Mars, and given her a chief place among the trains of the chaste Diana: if all these, I say, have been so thankful to the virtuous women of their time, that, by their diligence, the memory of their virtue remaineth in record to the posterity of all ages, what worthy cause of rebuke have we, who, living under a better climate and constellation, enjoying more pure laws, and aspiring nearer the image or semblance of divinity, will not expose the noble fruits of our time, which yields not only example of semblable virtue to the ancients, but exceeds them in continent living and chaste disposition. Whereof we have an example of Iphigenne, daughter of the King of Ethiopia; who, having already vowed her virginity to the Spouse of our souls, accepted rather the offer of present death than to be joined in marriage to a wanton young prince (provided for her by her father), with a number of like authorities which I could infer to prove the sincerity of women, who at the beginning, when our religion was first founded, did lay the corner-stone of purity without having the knowledge of man.

Neither is our age so void of examples of continency, nor the root of virtue so clean extirpated from amongst us, but we may see at this day sundry patterns of pudicity in the persons of all degrees of women, as well noble as of meaner condition, exceeding the virtue of such as antiquity hath in so great veneration. Wherein, for a familiar revenge of our ladies nowadays, touching the sinister impositions of divers

evil tongues inveighing against the whole sex, I have presented here upon the stage this history, taken out of Italian, whose authority as it is sufficient to answer the combat against the wicked challengers of the undefiled honour of the sacred sex feminine, so the discourse is able to move compassion to the hearts of men participating with nobility, and set abroach the conduits of tears in the eyes of such ladies and gentlewomen as take more pleasure to preserve in entirety the jewel of their honour than to open their ears to the charm of the vain lover, passioned as he feigneth for the beauty that passeth with the morning dew; importing also more cause of admiration, as the person in whom the accident is verified is of simple estate; for that the higher she is in degree, the more care ought she to have her honour exposing arguments and effects of virtue to the meaner sort, like as the torch, or hemisphere star, giveth light to the little candle and element of less substance. I wish the young ladies and damsels of our country would paint this table in their hearts; and, with the virtue and imitation of her chastity, fortify themselves against the peppered allurements of the crafty fowler who makes war against their honour, under the ensign of the blind captain Cupid and directed by the guide of folly; and not by example of her death to force an untimely and unnatural destiny for end of their days.

It need not seem doubtful to any at this day that Gazuolo is parcel of the dukedom of Mantua, planted in a most pleasant soil, right over against the father of floods, sometime called Eridanus, and now bearing the name of Po; whose sundry brooks, divided into diverse streams and pleasant channels, nourish by their moistures the whole country of Italy. Like as also it is of no less credit, that within our time and memory there was born and bred up in the same town a maid called Julia, whom, if fortune had preferred to the title of a princess or great lady, whereby her virtues might have been brought in reputation by authority of high estate, like as her goodly order and chaste conversation of life made her name famous, she might have served no doubt as the only lantern to give light to all degrees of youth in our age.

Her father was not made of so mean a mould for his birth as attended upon with continual poverty, having only for his portion the assistance and travail of his hands to sustain

himself and family. Wherein, albeit necessity (being the most grievous scourge of man's life) pincheth commonly so extremely that she makes us many times forget both honour, honesty, and good order, yea, and abuse the goodness of our nature, yet shall you find some so wholly resolved in virtue, and stand so surely upon the guard of their honest name, that, rather than the hungry rage of poverty or gnawing worm of necessity have power to induce them to do the thing that their honour and honesty cannot justify, they will not stick to resign the hard and extreme condition of their state into the hands of the miserable world by some glorious death, which is the only and chief repose of misery, and undoubted consolation of such as are always persecuted with the malice of adversity. Whereof you may note a familiar proof in the sequel of this Julia, who—notwithstanding the poverty of her parents—had won by her own industry such a general commendation of good government and chaste conversation of life, that, exceeding therein all the rest that were but her matches in equality of birth and calling, she brought also a decoration of state and increase of glory to the obscure name and pedigree of her poor ancestors.

Neither was she of less fame for the praise of her beauty and seemly shape of body ; wherein nature seemed to advance her with such assistance of her cunning that she appeared, amongst the rest of her companions, as the glorious rose in the fragrant and pleasant morning of May. She had, also, such a special gift and order in speaking, with a staid countenance during her conference with any, together with a wonderful grace in giving to everyone the due reverence of his calling, that, notwithstanding the simplicity of her house, with the small assistance of discretion, not yet confirmed with the number of sixteen years, her womanly and wise order might serve to instruct some ladies of high calling, and make blush a number of great dames that account themselves without comparison in diverse courts of Italy and elsewhere.

Albeit as all these virtues and rare gifts served rather to increase her praise and commendation among the people than any sure means to supply the poverty of her parents, or relieve the hardness of her own state, so her father forgat not to employ her in the trade of honest toil, and teach her to tread in the steps of his travail, sometime framing her to the use of the weed-hook, to turn up the earth with a spade in the

garden, and, as occasion served, to taste now and then of the husbandman's toil in attending the plough, with other exercises of pain always incident to the poor man as his only portion to defend him from the violence of hunger and extreme misery; which two hard enemies, with the severe diligence of the father, seemed so wholly to pursue this youngling, that there was no exercise of profit or honest travail of the hand wherein she did not exceed or do as well as the best; being withal so wholly resolved to prevent the malice of fortune with the sweat of her brows, that she was not seen to suffer the least moment of time to pass without the dispatch of some honest labour; persuading herself that, as idleness is rightly termed the root of sin and mother of mischief and special enemy to seduce and corrupt the chastity of women, so she is chiefly to be withstanded with the armour of honest endeavour, being denied to invade the hearts of such as keep their bodies accompanied with continual travail; neither doth that detestable vice expose other fruits than filthy imaginations and conceits of mischief, according to the authority of Plato, who affirmeth that in doing nothing men learn to do evil.

Wherein he is justified, also, by diverse texts of the Scriptures, willing us not to be idle, lest we fall into the danger of the tempter. Which Solomon in like sort doth avow, saying the devil is always in ambush to enter in them whose hearts he finds occupied with vain thoughts and their bodies abstaining from honest labour. And truly methinks the true Christian cannot stand too surely upon his guard in avoiding the penalties of idleness, seeing the terrible threats of the Gospel, summoning us, by the very words of our Saviour, to render account afore the throne of the Highest of every idle word and work we imagine or do during our abode in this transitory vale. Whereof this fair Mantuan, fearing no less to fall into the danger of that evil than careful to prevent all occasions of the same, would not admit any dispense or abstinence of travail, saving of the holy days, which she used as seasons of honest recreation in the open fields amongst other her companions, detesting unlawful haunts, and secret chatting with men in corners, the chiefest means to bring their name and doing in question.

For she that abandoneth the company of her companions, forsaking the place of public assembly to retire into the desolate and dark corners of the chamber, doth not only bring her

doings in doubt, but also sets the slanderer a-work to forge a thousand informations against her former title and name of honesty, how clear and strong soever it seemed in the judgment of all the world. And what other opinion is to be had of her that delights in secret conference, hating to have her sayings proceed in public, than that she treats of other affairs than she may well justify? For if she lived as she ought, and used none other terms than were to be avouched, she need neither fear the creaking of the door, nor use obscure and dark vaults as only witnesses of her talk. Whereof I could enlarge the proof with authority of antiquity, if the misery of our present time did not prefer example sufficient; which I wish may so instruct the careless mothers of England, that, keeping their daughters within the awe of correction, they make them also subject to the law and order of good government, lest both the one and the other become the wonder of the multitude and cause of foolish interludes devised on public stage by the like occasions.

But now to our Julia, whose chaste and upright order of living, being yet fresh within the memory of our age and not to be defaced with the length of time, serves, also, as a line to lead you young ladies to direct your lives—as near as you can—by the dial of her virtues. For she, treading thus both the steps of honest travail, and traded in the path of true perfection of life, divided the week into daily exercises of true toil and necessary affairs of her father, spending the holy days only in honest recreation among seemly company in the church-yard, or other convenient place of public assembly; where, being unhappily spied of a detestable palliard and common enemy of the honour of women, was suddenly summoned by the sentence of her destinies, and fell by no less misfortune into the danger of a fleshly lover. For, at the same instance, the noble Louis Gonzaga, then Bishop of the Duchy of Mantua, kept his residence at Gazuolo; where, amongst his train of household gentlemen, there was one who, serving the bishop in the office of a valet of his chamber, had been no less worthy of the credit of that room than of greater preferment at the hands of his master, if he had not been unhappily encountered by the disaster which this history presents unto you. But what a small spot stains a fair garment, and one vice that is detestable darkeneth the credit of a number of virtues!

It is to be noted (as I have said) that in Italy the meeting of youth, and dancing, is tolerable, so it be in the view and eye of the people. But whatsoever other men do think of the art of dancing, I am persuaded that it is rather a discipline devised within the school of Satan, than an exercise meet to encourage youth in the imitation of virtue. Wherein I appeal to justify my opinion, to the fruit and effects appearing daily in that lascivious trade. And leaving apart the invectives and infinite examples which the histories on both parts do infer in detestation of that wanton allurement or provocation to sin, I thought it sufficient to confirm my advice only with the authority of the Roman, who, dissuading all men from the exercise of dancing, saith that the countenance, gestes, and other behaviours of a dancer do nothing differ from the order and disposition of a fool.

Here this valet of chamber to the bishop, being unhappily present in an assembly of youth, espied by the like misfortune the order and behaviour of Julia; who, albeit she was the poorest of the company, yet she was nothing inferior to the best in seemly grace and womanly order appearing in her during the time of the dance; which, infecting already the eye of the gallant of Ferrara, moved him also with present desire to go near and take a better view of her beauty, which he was not able to consider with such judgment and assured stay of himself but the glimmering complexion of her face, dyed with a natural colour of white and red, made such a breach into his heart, that, wearing the picture of her beauty in the bottom of the same, proclaimed her, without further advice, the sovereign lady of his life and only mistress and ruler of his thoughts. And avowing herewith to yield her the whole honour of his service, he protested in secret to himself, with like vow and ceremony of vain conceit, not to leave the pursuit of such a prey till he had made a conquest of that he imagined. and encountered the effect of his desire by wearing the garland of the flower and first fruits of the maidenhead of Julia. Whom, because he stood on thorns till he had presented the first earnest penny of his service, he requested to dance; which, not knowing the cause of his courtesy, she refused not to do, as one no less ready to perform all requests and affairs of civility and good bringing-up, according to her calling, than excelling all the rest of her time in beauty and other virtues without exception.

But if this fond youngling and pupil of Cupid did feel afore the simple motions of love beginning to tickle him but with the desire only to view her at large, it is now that he resigned himself wholly into the danger of him who, as a subtle serpent, lieth in wait to invade them whom he finds unarmed with virtue, laughing afterward to himself at our readiness to listen to the lure of his bait, and run headlong into the labyrinth of endless disquiet.

And that which brought him more oil to his match, and kindled in his heart the present sparks of hot affection, was when he felt the tenderness of her hand ; which, albeit was every day dipped in divers unwholesome confections and always bare to abide the violence of the weather, not refraining the hardness or hard labour of any toil, retained such a delicate softness and natural hue of itself that it seemed equal, for the fineness and smoothness of skin, to some lady's, which, I know, are assisted with the help of waters and lye made for the nonce, and other legerdemains devised by the apothecary to preserve their hands in a continual moisture, with fine white and pleasant show. The pleasant reflection of her ladylike hand, which during the dance he failed not to grasp as often as he durst, gave such increase to the war already begun, renewing the combat of his thoughts with such fresh supplies of affection, that he found himself so much too weak to maintain war with one of the greatest lords of the world, that, giving place to his present fortune, he resigned the fortress of his former quiet, and became prisoner to him who would not be content with any other ransom than the loss of his liberty during his pleasure.

And albeit the poor gentleman, feeling too great an extremity in this first passion, would gladly have resigned his preferment, and not pursued the sequel or follow the chase; yet, whether it were the small experience he had in the school of love, or the angry doom of his destinies that would not dismiss him without the reward of his folly, or whether the foggy mist of fond affection had so sealed the eyes of his mind that he saw himself denied the assistance of any means to redeem him from the yoke of his new bondage, or what it was, the sequel of his ill fortune may argue sufficiently his folly. But well I know that for a disease of so strange disposition he lacked his necessary medicine, being no less deceived in the credit of his own wit, in seeking to quench

and mortify the fire already burst out into flame, by giving scope to his eye to feed continually upon her whom he knows to be the cause of his grief: neither did he other good to himself than cast water upon hot coals, doubling the rage of his affection by the desire he had to be continually in her company.

He ought rather to have abandoned the place with the presence of his enemy at the very first alarum and offer of the assault, dismissing the remembrance of her beauty afore it made any breach in his heart; for he that is unhappily fallen into the danger of love must not keep war with the remembrance of her that hath enchanted him, nor pursue the view of her beauty with a continual gaze or regard of his eye, but rather, eschewing the place and presence of his mistress (two common enemies to his quiet), seek to subdue the rage of his passion with long absence and far distance of his abode. Wherein he must seem so precise to cure so strange a disease, that, if unhappily he come within the air of the place where she is, he stand so surely upon his guard, that she once glance not upon him with a glimmering summons of her flattering eye; considering that in the very eye and look of a woman doth lurk an infection of such drawing virtue, that one simple object or glance of the same, being sufficient to pierce through the armour of his resistance, is also able to bring him eftsoons under the yoke of her awe.

But this foolish Ferrarese, rather resolved in his evil and contented with his choice, than desirous to retire in time, or able, as it seemed, to shun the peril of the loss of his liberty, gave place to his present fortune and entered the lists as thrall or captive to the beauty of Julia; with whom, after the end of two or three dances, he began to devise and discourse of love in this sort:

"If there cord of diverse histories of old time, together with the present view of sundry familiar examples of this day, did not so amply describe the power of love, and partly instruct me touching his order and disposition, I should seem no less amazed at the mystery of his trance than I feel myself unhappily encountered with the messenger of his behest. And justly, methinks, may we commence complaint against nature, who, framing us of a brickle and delicate metal, made us rather incident and apt to incur every danger of the flesh and peril of temptation, than armed us with choice of means to resist

the ordinary assaults of the world. Whereof,' saith he, "I may exclaim with good authority above the rest, seeing that, since the view of your presence in this place, I am fallen into the proof of the like peril. For as I have hitherto enjoyed the benefit of a most pleasant liberty, being no less free from all assaults of fond affection than void to desire to commend my service to the best lady of them all; so, since my greedy and unhappy eyes seized with such assurance upon your beauty, taking with large view the full measure of all your parts and making present report thereof to my heart and other the inward parts of me, I have sustained such hot alarums between my liberty and desire to do you service, that, being no longer able to restore the fight for want of fresh supplies, am here come under your lee presenting myself the prisoner of your beauty. Wherein, albeit, I cannot by any mercy of mine own crave an expedition of favour by justice, yet do I not despair that you will suspend my delivery, seeing my passion is of no less importance than either the abridgment or prolonging of my life, persuading myself with this special comfort, that under the veil of so rare a beauty, there cannot lurk any disposition of long cruelty."

But she, detesting no less his peppered persuasions than loathing to spend long time in so vain an argument, replied no less wisely than with terms of virtue, measuring her answer with the shortness of time she meant to devise with him.

"It is hard, sir," saith she, "to judge a difference between your unseemly discourtesy and the argument of your present folly, seeing both the one and the other import a semblable meaning of dishonesty, neither are they both void of equal reproach to your own estimation. And albeit your endeavour in such affairs ought not be answered but with terms of public exclamation, to the end the office of infamous slanders might yield you the worthy reward of your travail, yet, because the punishment of shame for this one offence shall not take away the hope of amendment and future grace in you, I am content to make counsel of the fault, and dismiss you with the free forgiveness of the fact. Wherein, as the remembrance of your example shall henceforth warn me to take heed to the subtle charms of others not differing from you in disposition, so let it suffice you that I make silence of your offence, without other rebuke to so great a disorder; with this further request, that this gentle repulse may rather

import a credit to my virtue than provoke you eftsoons to give the like charge of mine honour, which I hold no less dear than the greatest lady of our country. Neither shall you find my chastity less pure than my poverty virtuous."

Which albeit made the gallant somewhat amazed for the time, yet as a valiant soldier that will not leave the assault for one repulse, he gave a second charge with these terms :

" If you seem in this sort to pronounce the sentence of my death," saith he, " and suffer your cruelty to commit me to the hands of fatal execution, the world will note you a monster and enemy to nature, and God sure will call for a reckoning of so foul and cruel an act."

" The malice of the world," saith she, " is not so great nor partial in this respect as to yield me infamy in defending mine honour ; and nature is abused when we lose so precious a gift. And touching any account to make afore God, I think my soul shall stand in more danger in condescending to your request than if you wilfully die by your own folly. Wherefore I advise you, for end, to give over the pursuit of so vain an enterprise, and seek to bestow your travail where there is hope of better success, and amongst such as, making a common merchandise of their honour, will not stick to set it of sale to such as bid most for it. For my part, I am no less jealous of mine honesty than careful to keep in entire the name of my poor parents. Neither shall mine honour be sold for other value than the price of my life."

Which last words albeit argued to the gentleman a great unlikelihood to come to the effect of his desire, with no less impossibility to shake the fortress of her chastity, or make a breach in a castle of so valiant defence, yet would not he, for all that, give place to despair, but, retiring to the assistance of a new device, he learned the common haunt of his mistress going and coming from the field, as occasion of her business did call her ; where he, meeting her more often than he was welcome, forgot not eftsoons to commend unto her the remembrance of his cause, with a redress of his grief, hoping with the help of his importunity and assistance of time to remove the stone from her stomach, and procure a pleasant thaw to the frozen heart of this poor cottier. Wherein he gained no less than if he had spent so much time in numbering the small sands that cover the deserts of Arabia : in so much

that she willed him, now for all, to rest contented with what he had done and press her no further.

"For," saith she, "so long as my soul and body shall keep house together, I will make such a jewel of mine honour that there shall never frivolous lover have interest or authority to dispose of it. Neither will I give so large a scope of liberty to my unruly affections, as the precious flower of my chastity shall be a prey, or at the disposition of any but such as it shall please the Almighty to join with me in marriage. Wherefore, go open the pack of your trumpery in a market convenient for your purpose, and consider your calling, with the profession of your master, who ought to train you in such sort as you may rather appear true patterns and images of virtue than ministers of knavery, seeking to seduce poor maids of the country, who living in the fear of God, with no less care of their honest name, ought not to listen to the lure of love, or keep vain chat with companions like to yourself, but, following the discipline of virtue, to sustain our honest poverty with the travail of our hands, which is the portion appointed to us by Him Whom I beseech to mortify this rage of your folly, that hereafter I may live in peace and see you restored to the use of your former senses."

But he, being none other than the slave of folly, disposed wholly to feed upon the humour of his affections, had no other thought than to devise how to enjoy the first fruits and pleasant juice of the virginity of the chaste Julia, who, the less account she seemed to make of his grief, the greater grew his desire to pursue her: which he failed not still to perform with more vehemency than afore, publishing his affection by the sound of a number of doleful sighs, accompanied with tears of such pitiful regard that they seemed sufficient to pierce a heart wrought on the forge of flint or steel.

But who is able to corrupt the chastity of her that hath her heart armed with assurance in virtue? Or what is he that, either with the smooth style of his pleasant tongue, or subtlety in slents and fine devices, or other legerdemains of folly, can make so strong a charm to enchant the constancy of a woman resolved in the fear of God, with desire to wear a crown of immortality by the renown of her honest life? But it is to be resisted by a special confidence in God and assurance in her virtue. The pure and holy virgins in time past, whose names be registered in the book of fame, have not they been

strongly assailed with semblable assaults ; and yet, without shot or shed of blood, they have prevailed above the malice of them that undertook to rob them of the everlasting glory of their virginity ? And surely there is no malice of man so great, no device so detestable, that stands not in awe and stoops in the presence of true virtue ; neither can it pierce, and much less possess, any heart but that which it finds unarmed of a faith and fear in God, Who will neither suffer His servant to be tempted above his power, nor see him oppressed long with the malice of the wicked.

Here may the slanderer have wherewith to stop his mouth, and be brought to believe, by familiar proof, that virtuous women have better means to resist the vain importunities of love than the wicked and evil disposed have reason to seek to seduce the honour of their chastity. And if, by destiny or ill fortune, it happen that some one forget herself so far that she falls unhappily into the danger of the tempter, let her fault and shame be peculiar to herself and not stain the rest with the reproach of her folly. For it is no reason that when anything chanceth amiss, all men become guilty of the fault ; no more than when one man, among a number incident to the like disaster, becomes a thief or the worker of some other heinous offence, ought to infect others with the infamy due to himself, or impart the penance of the fate amongst others that himself only deserveth. For nature, making us all of one metal, hath given us indifferently a semblable perfection, with special decree that every man should be noted and judged as he is ; willing withal that if any of her creatures do unhappily decline, that he alone bear the reproach of his own fact, and not admit it for a consequent that the whole number should be spotted with the imperfection of one.

Besides in the beginning, when sin seized first upon man, albeit it is to be supposed that it took like possession of the woman, being made his companion and associated unto him by the will of God, yet have we no reason or means to persuade that they are either inferior in virtue or more apt to fall than we : neither ought we do them that wrong in esteeming them less weak than ourselves, or more subject to sin than the most and best assured of us all, seeing we find them longer in breath, and use more assurance in withstanding the sensual provocations of the flesh, than we have reason to assault them with the like alarums. And truly he gives more argument of

his fragility and weak resistance, who, at the first assault and motion of his wanton affections, doth yield himself prisoner to the appetite of his will, with intent to pursue the end of his lascivious desire, than she that, resisting of long time the hot alarums of his vehement requests, is driven at last, unwillingly, to resign the keys of her fortress; more, peradventure, to prevent the danger of despair in him whom she seeth ready to die for her sake, than for any desire to content the appetite of her own will. And yet cannot she escape the malice of suspicion, nor merit the name of perfect constancy, that is overcome with any enchantment, how strong soever it be, for that she cannot bear the title of true virtue unless she remain invincible to the end, weighing her honour and life in indifferent balance.

Whereof all ladies may behold a familiar proof in this mirror and gem of constancy, Julia; who, the more she was pressed and courted with the peppered allurements of the valiant soldier of love, the more did she rampire herself in assurance of virtue, seeming valiant in the defence of a fort that was inexpugnable.

Which, ministering nothing but a present despair to him to prevail by any policies afore devised, drove him to resort to the assistance of the pernicious and common means used ordinarily by the detestable palliard that cannot otherways deceive the simplicity of honest maids, and which, as an infection worse than the air of the pestilence, doth corrupt the greenness of youth afore it be confirmed with experience and discretion—I mean a she-bawd (whereof Paris hath less want than choice or store of honest women) which, coifed with visor or cloak of feigned holiness and masked wholly with a muffler of hypocrisy, seeming to the world to mortify her body with three or four solemn fasts in the week, watching in devout manner at the church-door for the devotion and alms of the people, and carrying in her hand a bawdy basket, rather to colour her villainy than to serve her necessary turn, becomes the colcarrier between the lover and his trull, making a match no less odious in the eye of the world than detestable afore the throne of the Highest, becoming by this means the first seducer of them that, afore the offer of her charms of painted allurement, were peradventure no less void of such imagination than free from intent ever to commit so foul an act; and yet use they such secret sleight in the convey

of their business, that the finest wits can hardly espy them, and the best eyes had need of spectacles to discover their trade. But what is it that love cannot find out ; whose eyes, albeit, be so piercing of themselves that they will penetrate, and find a hole to peep out of, the strongest and closest tower in a country, yet hath his art such a gift of revelation in this case that there is no means, how secret soever it be, but he gives information of it to him that traffics in his affairs, with intent to advance the effect of his desire ?

Wherein this valet of chamber, forgetting neither rule nor instruction, gat him in haste to this double dory and solemn hypocrite, whom he knew to be an ordinary solicitor in the like affairs, and a ready physician to cure all diseases of their importance. He first conjures her in anywise to make counsel of that which he meant to communicate unto her, and then to assist his grief with the uttermost of her diligence. Wherewith she, seeing even now as far into his disease as his physician did into his urine, casting already in her head what mark the poor lover would shoot at, began to prefer a certain difficulty to promise either the one or the other, alleging that if his request should tend to the hurt or disadvantage of her conscience, his labour were lost any further to pursue the assistance of her good-will. " For," saith she, " I had rather die with the note of honest name, which hitherto I have kept, than, upon the end of my years, do the thing with my body that in the other world might bring my soul in hazard of grace afore Him Whom it behoves me not to offend."

But the subtle lover, who knew well enough that her trade consisted in the convey of bawdy errands, and that the body and souls of such filths were no less subject to corruption than their hypocrisy and veil of holiness detestable, brake with her in few words of the cause of his coming, desiring her in any wise not to dissemble her endeavour on his behalf ; adding for a further circumstance that she should reap a thankful reward of her travail. Wherein, because he knew that money was the next means and only key to open the devout heart of this monster, and that such she-apes and gulfs of iniquity have no other God but the gain of their abominable trade, let fall into her lap some three or four ducats ; whose first view prevailed so much and had such power to convert this painted image, that without further entreaty she removed the veil of her first hardness and avowed herself the handmaid

of his behest ; willing him to live in hope, and repose himself wholly upon her diligence.

" Whereof," saith she, " I doubt not to present thee such speedy effect, as within few days the joy that thou shalt feel, by the encounter of thy desire, shall far exceed the anguishing grief of thy present passion. And thus much I will promise thee further, that if she be but a woman, and not possessed with any part of a devil (as many of us be), I will so conjure her with charms and enchantments of my art, that, of herself, she shall offer thee the possession of that which heretofore thou couldest never win by power or policy. But take heed, my son," saith she, " that this be mum, and my endeavour not discovered to any, for as pity, more than other respect, hath moved me to undertake thus much for thy contentation, being the first that ever brought me to practise so bad a trade, so I would not, for the price of all I have, that the world should understand I were a broker in a business so far unmeet for mine honour and age."

" Tush ! " saith this fondling and cockney of Ferrara, " let not the fear of that be any impediment to your diligence ; for I am no less careful of your reputation than desirous to see the effect of your promise. Wherein, I pray you, forget not to make expedition your chiefest minister, remembering, withal, that the doubtful mind is never in quiet, and the desiring heart lives always in expectation ; protesting unto you eftsoons, in the word of a gentleman, that if your travail put me in possession of my prey, I shall not be so glad to enjoy the virginity of my dear Julia, as ready to requite your endeavour, in such sort as the reward of your travail herein shall be a relief to you and yours as long as you live."

" Well ! well ! saith this old hag, " I will try your courtesy, and yourself shall be witness of my diligence, wishing you no less willing to perform but the one half of your liberal offer than I doubt not to deserve it with speed. For if ever one woman had power to overcome another, I make my account that she shall not escape my hands till I have taught her such a dance as she never learned in her life."

Wherewith she dismissed that silly fool of Ferrara, quarrelling with his unquiet thoughts, and yet in some hope to be holpen by the assistance of his old *dariolette* and broker of bawdry ; and she repaired immediately to her charge, and watching her time to execute the same. Wherein she was

furthered by a help of Fortune; who favoured this enterprise so much, that the poor peasant and his wife being one day abroad at their labour, Julia alone was left at home; with whom this lewd messenger, after a few familiar greetings, powdered full of sophistical holiness and cursed hypocrisy began to parley in this sort:

"I marvel, my girl, to see thee so forgetful of thyself, in abusing so much the precious gift of nature and greenness of thy pleasant youth, that, neither respecting the due merit of the one nor the other, and less worthy to enjoy the worst of them both, thou hast gotten of late the title of proud and cruel. Dost not thou know that the greatest praise to be given to a maid of thy age and calling consists and comes chiefly by her courteous behaviour to every man; and that, of the contrary part, she is pointed at of the world that, seeming to stand altogether upon her slippers, rejects the honest offers of courtesy and friendship, arguing by that means her haggard and rude disposition? Wherein, as the chiefest point of commendation of us women depends upon certain terms of courtesy and shows of friendship, so are we chiefly bound to make declaration of the same on the behalf of them that seem to honour us with semblable profession, being bound thereunto by the virtue of their former merits, and the least we can do is to requite them with the like affection.

"God hath not created us under the climate or constellation of Mars, nor made us to be ministers of cruelty, neither hath He given us the heart of a lion or disposition of a tiger, but framed us of a metal more tractable; which appears rightly in the enticing countenance of thy flattering face, arguing withal, that under the veil of such shining beauty there cannot be shrouded a heart of revenge or disposition of cruelty. And as the drawing regards of your eyes, glancing upon a man with no less force than the hot reflection of the sun, piercing each thing upon earth subject to his heat, doth make him strike sail, and seek to be guided by the glimmering light of such twinkling stars, forcing him withal to pursue your favour with the frank offer of his humble service; so you are not only bound to appear reciprocal in affection, but also yield them the due meed of so great a martyrdom, derived of causes in yourself, and not refuse to be courted with young men, or mislike their endeavour in seeking to win by their service the glory of that which the summons of your eyes

doth half promise them. Wherein, although they are partly guided and stirred by nature, yet are they chiefly allured and set on fire by the influence of your beauty.

"Our age, beside, is not void of experience how divers maids, being honoured with their service and affection of sundry gentlemen of no small account, have seemed rather rashly to refuse the proffer of such friendship than rightly weigh the merit of their courtesy; and after receiving the due sentence of their cruelty, have not only doted upon such as took pleasure in their grief, and laughed at their folly, but also deserved not (for any gift that was in them) to receive the favour of one simple regard of the eye. Which, as it is to be noted to proceed of the just vengeance of that God Who first stirs in us the motions of such friendship, so are we warned (in embracing the contrary) to eschew the peril of semblable accidents. And so, for your part, being no less fortunate than the best of any age heretofore, and honoured with no less true affection than dutiful service of one that is ready to pawn his living, honour, and all that he hath for the interest of your good-will, I marvel you regard so lightly the reward of so great a virtue, and use so small care in curing your own disease, which, because you dare not declare, doth make a secret martyrdom of your flourishing youth. Albeit, for end, if you will willingly embrace the gift of present time, and use mine advice in the pursuit of your pleasure and commodity, I doubt not within less than a moment to restore you to treble contentment of mind, relieve the needful poverty of your parents, and make you exceed the rest of your neighbours in authority and estimation."

But Julia, no less glad to hear an end of this pernicious oration, than loathing by good right the embassing of the detestable and cursed *marmotte*—which she could not conceal in such sort but the argument of colour in her face bewrayed the just anger of her mind—replied unto her in this sort:

"I see," quoth she, "the world is no less wicked of itself than the way hard to discern the disposition of every people. Neither can a man be known by his shadow; and easier it is to fall into the danger of the evil than to find a true pattern of virtue. Neither is pure gold known by its glistering colour, nor that religion perfect that smells of superstition, exposing fruits of execrable corruption and sensual conspiracies.

Is this the good counsel you give to the youth of Gazuolo? Is this the example of virtue or instruction of honesty which is to be expected in the number of your years? Have you thus long bleared the eyes of the world with a mask of feigned holiness, and now retire to the vomit of your hypocrisy, with intent to seduce her who is no less assured in virtue than you unworthy to enjoy the benefit of life in abusing your duty toward God, and deceiving the opinion and expectation of all men? Albeit my poverty be great, and my parents of less ability to relieve me, yet hath God so endowed me with the gift of thankful contentation that my estate, with continual use of honest travail, is no less pleasant to me than the delicate order, full of superfluity of vain pomp, used by great ladies nowadays, wantonly nourished in palaces and places of princes, being more ready to run under the danger of a thousand torments, yielding death his tribute with the sacrifice of my body, than to lay my chastity in pawn (as you persuade me) for the enlarging the hard condition of myself or state of my poor parents.

"Neither have I hitherto felt any motion of that folly which you call love, and much less mean I to make any experience of his flattering offers, how great soever they appear. Wherefore, let it suffice you to have broached the vessel of your villainy afore her that, in respect of your years, is contented to commit your filthy message to silence; wishing you henceforth to broke in matter of more honesty, or at the least to seek to solicit such as are as careless of their honour as you ready to seduce it. For my part, I have weighed mine honour and life in indifferent balances, with intent to exchange both the one and the other at equal price; and as for the gallant that sent you, he makes true declaration of the love he bears me, in seeming more desirous to enjoy the pleasure of my body than careful to preserve mine honour or prevent the danger of my soul. And you as the unnatural *bourreau*, suborned to subvert the chiefest ornament of my life, are content to become his messenger and minister, and, under the colour of devotion, to communicate matters of bawdry, so, for his part, let him keep that he hath won, and pay himself with the tribute of his own folly, for I am not only resolved henceforth not once to speak to him, but also to shun the place where he is, as a venomous serpent and ravenous wolf, rather desirous to make merchandise of my body than careful

anyway of my reputation ; wishing you also for end to depart the place, lest your long tarrying yield you the due reward of your travail."

Which sharp repulse and last threats so amazed the bawd and nipped her in the head, that although she were more excellent in the gifts of an orator than belonged to one of her trade, yet durst she neither trust the smooth and sugared style of her tongue in excusing the cause of her coming, nor seem eftsoons to credit the fineness of her wit in devising new charms to enchant the pudicity of the maid ; but, as one no less ashamed of that she had done than fearing to be discovered and committed to shame, retired with less noise than joy of her message, leaving Julia rejoicing the goodness of her fortune, that had delivered her to safety from the perils of so great a mischief ; persuading herself henceforth to use the policy of the serpent in stopping her ears, lest with the assistance of time, and liberty to hear her speak, she might unhappily fall into the danger of her charm. Wherein she seemed to observe the rule of wisdom, which forbids all women of honest part the caquet or company of them that go about to corrupt their chastity, seeing that she that willingly admits and listeneth to the infectious chat of such devouring caterpillars seems in the judgment of the world to be of disposition ready to obey their lore. And what great battery need we to beat that fortress whose captain demands a parley and sueth for composition ?

But what was the passion all this while of the poor Ferrarese, if not such as commonly is incident to them that languish of the like disease ; for, wafting indifferently between hope and despair, he seemed more ready to incur the danger of the one than able to convert the benefit of the other into a help for himself ? Wherein he was the rather furthered by the report of his bawd ; who, denied to perform any part of her promise, and less able to answer his expectation, returned as it were with a flea in her ear, and being no less ashamed of that she had done than doubtful to proceed any further, seemed with the report of her cold success to pronounce the extreme sentence and final arrest of his life. But love, who first stirred up the humour of his folly, undertaking to be his guide during the convey of this business, would not leave him alone in the midst of his pageant without sufficient matter to treat upon ; neither thought he it time to present

the catastrophe or dismiss him from the stage till he had played the uttermost act of his folly.

Wherefore, feeding the fondling with vain suggestion, and dandling him still with diverse arguments and likelihoods of good success, offered therewith the assistance of a new device : which was, that seeing prayers could not prevail nor importunities take place, and the frank offer of his continual service not only refused, but resolved her so deeply in the disdain and hate of his remembrance, that she abhorred his company no less than the presence of the cockatrice or basilisk serpent, he should retire to the attempt of money, as a sure help to supply the weakness of his former devices ; whose force, albeit is so great that of itself it is able to pierce the strongest tower of a kingdom, being the chiefest engine, as the poets feign, that opened Jupiter the door of the brazen tower wherein the fair daughter of Acrisius was curiously kept, yet hath it no power to approach the palace of virtue, and less able to invade or make any breach into the heart confirmed in pure chastity : whereof our poor Julia hath left an undoubted example to all degrees of future succession. For she, resolved wholly in the true imitation of virtue, rejected all offers of filthy gain, accounting the contentment of the mind to exceed all the riches of the world, neither thought she her worthy of due veneration, nor meet to be admitted in the fellowship of the tried sort, that with a constant proof of their faith do not make their chastity of as great admiration as the fragility of man seems great in doting upon a beauty that fadeth as a shadow, and of less continuance than a flower.

But now to your valet of chamber, who, somewhat revived with a new hope of good luck in the sequel of this second device, preferred it immediately to execution ; and encouraging the bawd with the offer of his hope, instructed her eftsoons with new terms more vehement to persuade than likely to speed ; and so, dismissing this second embassage, commits her to the goodness of fortune. Here mother-bee, laden with honey and jewels, retires again to her former trade of shame ; where, marching with no less courage than hope of good speed, thought herself armed with sufficient weapons to enter the fortress and to put the prisoner into the possession of him that desired nothing so much as to enjoy the pillage of so precious a prey. Albeit she fished afore the net, and made her reckoning without her host.

For as soon as she came to the cottage of Julia, and began to enter into the preamble of her embassage, opening withal the bore of her merchandise and jewels, the maid, abhorring no less the company of the bawd than loathing the sight of the ministers of corruption, could not so bridle her humour of just anger, but interrupting her babbling discourse, she seized in haste upon the jewels and other presents, which, without respect of their value, she cast into the midst of the street, imparting the like courtesy to the lewd bringer, whom she took by the shoulders and thrust out of her house, with threats that if she adventured eftsoons to come thither, she would present her with her message afore the Lady Marquise, who hated such trulls and corruptors of youth as a pestilence or worse infection ; saying besides that he that sent her gave sufficient proof of his folly, in seeking to seduce her by money and presents, that took no pity of his tears and former complaints of dolour : neither was he less vile to think to buy her with money, that is not to be sold but by the price of virtue, than she detestable afore God and the world that measureth her honour by the price of her profit : warning her (as for all) henceforth to desist for fear of the reward of shame, and he to rest contented with the wrong he had already done, without pressing her any further to put his fault and punishment in publication.

Which last threats struck such a fear into the heart of the old hag, with a present despair to prevail anyway in the pursuit of her quest, that, being only glad to escape so well the danger of her deserving, she retired in haste to the silly Ferrarese ; to whom (in place of good news or pleasant report of her success) she ministered persuasions to correct his fancy, and forget to love such one as makes no account of his service ; willing him withal to plant his affection in some better soil, upon such ones as were not brutish or void of reason to requite the merit of his service.

" For " saith she, " these beasts, and imps without wit or order of civility, do also lack discretion to consider in cases of love, or yield the due meed of true affection ; neither can they degenerate from the climate of their base descent, or do other thing than such as the wilful lore of their folly doth lead them unto. And being favoured (as it were of nature) with the gift of a certain beauty, which brings them in estimation amongst men, they are so assotted in the humour of self-will,

that they seem rather to abuse the benefit of so precious a jewel than worthy to wear so rare an ornament. And for this," saith she, "that will not be moved with prayer nor present, nor any device serve to reclaim her haggard mind (seeming but to quarrel with all offers of courtesy), I cannot think that it is some hard rock, converted in the shape of a woman or figure of beauty, to become the tyrannous tormenter of them that unhappily are summoned to serve her. Wherefore, seeing I am denied to assist you by my travail according to my promise, I pray you let me advise you to stop the course of affection, and choke the channel of your love, afore it overflow the hope of recovery. And cease any longer to feed the humour of your passion with the remembrance of her, that seems to take pleasure in your grief."

"Well! well!" saith the dolorous lover, "I would I could as easily forget, as you are apt to persuade, or that you had thus much advised me afore you gave me assurance of relief by your diligence; but chiefly I wish that I had eschewed the ill when I admitted the cause: then had I reserved my liberty, lived free from passion, void from unacquainted extremities, and not lament too late in this sort mine own disaster, nor stand need to communicate with you who sell your advice for money, and make your travail the merchant of filthy gain. Albeit, seeing want of discretion hath stirred up this error, and the folly of youth prevailed above the force of wisdom, I must be driven to make of necessity a law, and give place to the sentence of my present fortune, grieving, notwithstanding, that the friendship and undoubted zeal of affection which I bear her should reap the fruits of rigour and receive the merit of their virtue at the hands of cruelty. At the least I will not so despair, but that the argument of a future hope shall keep me in breath, and, expecting the benefit of a better time, I will commit myself to the government of patience, who, as I have heard, is the only touchstone to try a man that is fallen into terms of affliction."

But here the gallant seemed rather to feed the time than bind himself to perform the effect of his own words; neither meant he to suffer his last resolution to pass for current money, and much less to content himself with his cards. Seeing he liked not his game, and seeing he could not prevail by policy nor win the fort by summons or offer of composition, he determined (as his last help) to use the uttermost of his

forces and perform his conquest whatsoever it cost him. But thus much by the way.

There is no great enterprise, to what end soever it tend, whether it be guided by virtue or conducted by vice, whose effect can answer the expectation of the inventor, unless there be a room reserved for a third to participate therein, as well for the expedition of the cause as sure convey of the mystery; so this valet of chamber, resolved absolutely in the pursuit of his quest, imparteth the discourse of his love passed, his sinister success in the same, his diverse assaults to the fort, and his sundry and sharp repulses, to a dash-buckler of the bishop's, who made no more conscience to be a minister of evil than the outlaws of Shooters Hill use courtesy in stripping our merchants and after send them to London with penniless budgets. He forgat not also to make him privy to his last resolution, craving therein the assistance of his friendship, in such sort as, upon the instant, he made him avow the same to the uttermost of his power.

"Only," saith he, "devise the way; and my diligence shall declare the zeal I bear thee, with the desire I have to place thee in the bosom of thy felicity. It were a folly," saith this desperate lover, "to reiterate the order of my former devises, and to present her eftsoons with offices of courtesy, it were but time lost: only there rests to offer her the rack—I mean, to oppress her with force. Neither do I care what pennyworths be made of my life, so that I may in any sort revenge the obstinate cruelty of her who, peradventure, after the first taste of the pleasant juices of love, will slack the bridle of her rigour, and convert the hard and angry climate of her invincible humour into a disposition of less difficulty, and she easier hereafter to be entreated. Neither would I have thee to respect the danger or impossibility of the enterprise, considering the beginning of all things imparts a certain difficulty; but after the onset is given, the worst is past, and no cause of fear or doubt remains; but weighing the pleasure thou shalt do me, imagine also how deeply thou shalt leave me in thy debt, who will study to requite it with the like, and all I have else that may stand thee in stead."

Wherewith he prevailed so much over the viperous inclination of his co-traitor, that, albeit he knew his consent were not so wicked as the doing of the act more detestable.

yet, weighing the present offer of his friendship with the great authority he had with the bishop, and forgetting the duty of his conscience, confirmed eftsoons his consent, willing the desolate lover to take heart at grace and repose himself chiefly upon the aid of his friendship. "And because," saith he, "the chief convey of this mystery consists in the consent of convenient time and place, let it be your whole endeavour to watch when she goeth into the fields alone; to the end that, in using our advantage, we may have time to do our feat without dread or danger of any."

This was not so soon agreed upon between them two as the effect followed with the expedition of a moment. For the crafty lover marked diligently the hours and times of her ordinary labours; neither could she haunt so secret a place but his eye was ready to discover her. And so, lying in ambush in the way of her usual trade to the corn-fields, had her at last brought to his stale. Which after he had imparted to his marrow, they failed not to follow the trace in as soft and subtle a manner as the wily fox; who, when he comes to spoil the poultry of the farmer, is so circumspect in his doing that the least noise of the world makes him take a bush till his fear be passed: so this Ferrarese and his fellow pursued the poor maid, by such secret and unknown ways, and with a speed more than necessary for the execution of a good and lawful business, that her client appeared at her back afore she was aware; who, having no time to spend in circumstance, saluted her with the cause of his coming in this sort:

"If length of time be the true touchstone to try a difference between the feigned heart and firm affection, you have a sufficient proof of my constancy; or if long service with sincere loyalty may seem meritorious, you alone can judge my diligence and I accuse your cruelty. But if the tribute of true friendship is to be paid with a reply of semblable affection, why do you in this sort suspend my suit, doubling my passion in denying the thing that is due to me by just title? How can you thus long keep me in captivity that offer my life for a ransom; or when I sue for my right, to reward me with cruelty which I have not deserved and less seeming for one of your calibre and calling? It is time now to strike sail and remove the veil of your ancient rigour, whereof I have tasted of long time, and, weighing indifferently the merit

of my martyrdom, to yield me meed accordingly. Let me once taste the virtue of your bounty, as well as I have hitherto lived under the yoke of your cruelty, so that the meed of my own deserving may at least give end to the evils which I suffer by your means ? "

Wherewith the poor Julia, no less amazed at his sudden encounter in that place than unprovided of an answer to his doubtful demand, was driven to reply according to the shortness of her time and leisure.

" If you appeal to the length of time for declaration of your loyal love and proof of constancy," saith she, " I crave no other judge of your foul desire, rather to rob me of that I hold most dear than to honour me with the offer of true affection. Wherein I am justified by the diverse disorderly means which heretofore you have suborned to advance your wicked intent. Neither deserve I of right the imputation of cruelty, and much less of unseeming rigour as you term it, considering I neither used the one nor the other but as a special virtue in defence of mine honesty. And touching your passion and torment, proceeding rather by want of discretion in yourself than occasion on my part, I see neither cause to complain your grief nor reason to relieve it. Neither can I answer you with other terms but commit you to the merit of your folly. In wishing me to give end to your evils, you press with more than is in my power ; seeing I was neither privy to the beginning nor cause of the continuance, and much less experienced in the cure of such diseases. Only, I pray you, forbear eftsoons to pursue me, who, being not equal as you have said in quality or calling, am less ready to agree with you in consent, or fulfil the beastly appetite of your will : desiring you, for end, to let me live as I am, and not to serve me henceforth with any process of vain importunities. For I had rather endure the martyrdom of a thousand torments than do the thing that mine honour cannot justify."

Wherewith, regarding with good eye the fierce countenance of her enemy, arguing the present trouble of his mind, and fearing withal, by the secret instinct of her heart, the near approach of an evil turn, she began to amend her pace ; which, also, she doubled now and then, as one that durst not run from him that she most abhorred. But he that was loath to lose the benefit of so good a time, and less willing to have so sweet a morsel taken out of his mouth, feigned a

certain offer of his service to conduct her to the town, preferring therewith, as afresh, diverse requests to take pity of his passion. Which albeit she heard without any answer, yet was it not in her power to pass the hands of her destiny, which by this time had brought them into a place convenient for the execution of his execrable enterprise, far from the town and out of the ordinary haunt of company, and (that which best favoured his intent) in the midst of a corn-field, being a covert most convenient for such an act.

Where (having now but one part to play) he taketh her, and offers to kiss her. Which albeit she resisted to the uttermost of her little strength, crying out against his force and foul meaning, yet it was but time lost, considering she was immediately assailed by the other, who, persuading her to silence, said her bravery was too great for one of her calling, and that they came not hither to take pity of her complaints, neither should she escape so good cheap as she thought. She desired them to abstain from violation of her body, and give her what death they thought good. They excused themselves of any intent to do murder. "Only," say they, "we are come hither to bend you by force that will not bow by any entreaty. Wherefore, if you think you have any wrong, refer the cause to the long continuance of your cruelty, which is now at point to be revenged."

Pity it was to hear the dolorous tunes of the poor maid with the miserable shrieks which she threw up into the air to witness her innocency: wherein she continued, without any echo of rescue, till the detestable palliard had spoiled the flower of her virginity. And then he began to persuade her to patience, willing her hereafter not to become so curious of her chastity, nor refuse to admit the offer of his friendship; whereof he promised so largely that, if she would, he would take her from her father and keep her at his charges, presenting at the instant a purseful of money; willing her thenceforth to cast away all cause of care, and dispose herself only to cherish and make much of the rest of her life. "For the which," saith he, "you shall find me as careful as you shall think convenient. And if hereafter you have a desire to marry, doubt not to repose yourself therein upon me; for I will so well provide and assist you with so good a portion, that the same shall be plentiful enough to sustain you and relieve the needful condition of your parents."

But she, no less loathing the offer of his filthy promise than detesting the villain that would not cease yet to corrupt her, having by this time recovered her senses, defied him with his ministers of infection ; saying that, although his villainy and force hath defiled the chastity of her body and given him the effect of his lascivious desire, yet should he never be able, either with his money or otherways, to corrupt the sincerity of her heart. " Whose innocency," saith she, " will triumph over thy execrable act, afore Him Who is to yield the due hire of thy travail. Is it in thy power to satisfy or leave me contented that hast taken that from me which all the world cannot eftsoons restore me ? No ! no ! it is God of Whom I must claim satisfaction in punishing the two traitorous *bourreaux* and ravenous spoilers of the virginity of me, poor wretch, who was born to abide the sentence of my destiny."

The gallant, thinking to appease the extremity of her passion, began to prefer persuasions of comfort : which she defied with such spite and bitter terms of just reproach against him, that, loathing to suffer her eyes to feed upon him that had infected all the parts of her body, told him that the only view of his villainous looks made her forget all order of patience. Which he took as a commission to depart, fearing withal that the noise of her complaints might by chance come to the ears of some that passed that way, who, understanding the discourse of the rape, would make report to the bishop, whose profession and oath is chiefly to punish offenders in the like accidents.

Here the sorrowful Julia, being void of company, saving the doleful echoes of woods and rivers that answered her cries with like complaint, renews the war of her present disaster ; who, tearing her hair without respect, and quarrelling with the dowry that nature had given her, would gladly have touched her with imputation in making her incident to so wretched a destiny, in exclaiming still upon the malice of her Fortune, if the abundance of tears, accompanied with sighs of pitiful disposition, had not so stopped the course of speech that for the time she was driven into silence. And being by little and little restored again to the liberty of her tongue, and the source of her sorrow somewhat retired, she made a short invocation to God in this sort :

" O Heavenly Father," saith she, " I see that the rigour of Thy justice hath prevailed above the benefit of Thy

mercy, and that Thou dost award me this hard penance for the punishment of my faults passed. With what face, alas! shall I behold my poor father, whose comfort, as it consisted in my well-doing, so his grief will be without comparison, hearing of the hard terms of my mischance. In desolation shall he knit up the remainder of his old years, that coming into any place, the remembrance of my fault drawing the blood of shame into his face, will make him blush and eschew the company where afore he needed not have doubted to have marched amongst the best. And shall I dissemble that which I intend not to hide, or keep it secret that toucheth me so near? No! no! as the innocency of my mind is recorded afore God, so, because the world shall also witness how clear I was from consent, I will use no other water to wash away so great a spot than the sacrifice of death; which I will follow with no less expedition than the treason of the villain hath been cruel in taking from me that which made me to live."

Wherewith, dismissing her complaint, she ceased also from tears and put herself in order to go to the house of her father, who—by evil luck—was not then at home. There she puts on her best garment she had, and attiring herself in order to go to some great meeting or banquet, shuts the door of her cottage, and leading her younger sister in her hand, went forthwith to an aunt of hers, who, as one overcharged with sickness and years, was not able to stir out of her bed. Afore whom, as she was in the midst of the repetition of her chance, revealing the whole order and circumstance of the fact—which she could not do without great effusion of tears; for that the very remembrance of the deed restored a fresh alarum of her sorrows—she fell suddenly into a qualm or passion of sounding; wherein she remained tranced without all argument of life, till by the help of the assistants, she was eftsoons delivered to the use and liberty of her senses; when, quarrelling still with the horror of the fact and desire to be revenged by death, she seemed to rebuke her own imbecility and faintness of courage, saying:

"What sign of virtue is this to seem to shrink, when arguments of constancy ought chiefly to appear? Who will desire to live that hath lost the renown of honour, which ought to be the most precious jewel and badge of the life? Or what pleasure is it to possess the presence of the body already spotted with infamy, when the soul, weary of her habitation,

is ready to resign her ancient abode? What felicity have they in life, that, being the gaze and wonder of the multitude, cannot claim the privilege of any place but the people will point at them? Neither can they hide them in so secret a corner, but infamy will hunt them out and shame discover them, attending them to the very end of their days. No! no! let not them live that are desirous to die; and death is most acceptable to such as hate the fruition of life. For my part, I loathe already the remembrance of life, seeing I have lost the chiefest pillar of the same. Whereof I mean to make speedy declaration, by the sentence I have already pronounced of my end. Wherein it shall appear to the world that, although my body have tasted of the malice of the wicked by force, yet my mind remains entire without spot or consentment to the villainy; which, as my chief bequest and last testament in this world, I leave registered in the remembrance of you, good aunt, to make relation to my desolate parents, and the whole world besides, of the accident of my wretched disaster; and that although your unhappy niece and miserable Julia hath, by mere force, lost the outward show of her honour, yet her conscience remaining unspotted and soul clear, ready to fly to the heavens to witness her integrity afore the sacred theatre or tribunal-seat of God, cannot depart with worthy contentment afore I offer my life to the waves, to purify the filthy spot wherewith my body remains painted on all parts, by the infection of the detestable rape of force."

Wherewith she departed, not tarrying the reply of her aunt, who thought to have dissuaded her from the pursuit of her desperate intent. And being come to the river of Oglio, kissing her sister, with a last cry to God to receive her soul to His mercy, she leapt headlong into the water; which, as a merciless element, respecting neither the innocency of her cause nor desperate order of dying, committed her to the bottomless throats and gulfs of the surges. Which was the end of this miserable Julia; whose life only deserves commendation for the example of her virtue, and death worthy to be committed to oblivion for the signs of desperation wherewith it was infected.

But after this chance burst out into terms and became the report of the people, God knoweth what general desolation was among all the estate of the city; as well for the strangeness of the fact, as for that the villain was fled that caused

the bruit: who, if he had been taken, had done penance of this fault with the loss of his life in example of others. The body was found by the diligence of Louis Gonzaga, who would not suffer it to be buried in the church-yard, or other sanctuary, because of the desperate manner of her death, but caused it to be solemnly accompanied with the tears and great dole of diverse ladies into a place or grave in the field; where he meant in short time to set up a tomb of marble, with a monument of the particular discourse of the virtues and singular gifts of grace in his poor countrywoman.

Whose death I wish may learn all estates to eschew the peril of despair, and order of life to instruct all the young ladies of England to resist the charms and sugared allurements of love; who, the more he is feasted with pleasant regards of the eye, or encountered with secret conference in corners, or courted with embassages, or, lastly, banqueted with dishes of delicate toys or vain importunities, the more he is ready to invade and apt to overcome. But, on the contrary part, the way to keep war with that vagabond, and to flee his infections, is (as Julia did) to march against him with a flag of virtue, using withal the policy of Ulysses in stopping your ears from the peppered harmony of them that, delighting only in the prey of your outward beauty, have no respect to the ornament of the soul; which, being kept pure and undefiled to the end, yields you a reward of immortality, and your renown never to be razed out of remembrance till the extreme dissolution of the world.

NINTH TALE

THE LADY OF CABRIO

THE ARGUMENT

THERE was never mischief of former time nor vice in present use, wherein men are, or have been, more drowned or drawn by a beastly desire than in the execrable and deadly sin of whoredom. By the which, besides that the spiritual fornication is figured in some sort, yet is it forbidden unto us expressly by the inviolable laws, not written in the tables where the ancients were wont to grave directions and orders to politic states of the Romans, Athenians, Egyptians, or Spartans, but recorded in the everlasting Book, within the which the very finger of God hath sealed His infallible statutes. Whereof as He would that His children and faithful heirs of His kingdom were made partakers, with desire and endeavour of imitation, so we are all warned by the same defence, that, besides the wrong and harm we do to our own bodies, we offend heinously against the health of our souls, specially in corrupting the wife of our neighbour, with the abuse of that part of her which is necessary to be guarded with as great care and watch as we read was used sometime in the superstitious ceremonies of the vestals of Rome in keeping a continual fire in their temple. The greatness also of this sin of adultery, bringing (as you see) an equal hurt to the soul and body, hath forced a wonderful severity in both the laws, punishing by death such as do profane that holy and inviolable bond and bed of marriage, where is only a place of purity, and no oblation to be offered or admitted but the sacrifice of honesty and lawful substance. Besides, what slanders and mortality amongst men have sprung out of the vicious fountain of that sin, the marriage-bed of Menelaus, defiled by the king's son of Troy, hath left sufficient example and cause of exclamation amongst the Phrygians, with reason to all posterities to detest such villainy as a vice most abominable. In Egypt, the Shechemetians, for like respect, under Abraham and Isaac, have felt the mighty hand of God ; although their offence (in some sort) was excusable by ignor-

ance, for that they thought the wives which they took, had been unmarried. Likewise, if there be any faith in the poetical fictions, we see the arguments of most of their tragedies were founded either upon the punishment or despair of such as, not able to revenge the wrong of their lascivious wife and wicked Satanist her minion, convert and execute their rage and fury upon themselves.

Wherein our world at this day is grown to such a malicious gulf and bottomless sea of vices, that the wild nations, without either awe of God or fear of His laws, governed only by an instinct of nature, are more curious to keep the honour of their bed than diverse countries in the heart and bowels of Christendom, where the adulterer is not punished but by protestation or attorney, and where the poor man that receiveth the wrong is rather jested and pointed to with forked fingers (according to the Italian brag), than he persecuted in any sort that procureth the evil. Which partiality, or rather unlawful favour of the law and deputies of justice, serveth as sufficient encouragement both to the one and other whoremonger. Whereupon followeth so many murders of husbands by means and hands of their wives, to the end they may pass their amorous practise with more pleasure and less fear; the poisoning and drowning of so many lawful children for advancement of those whose bastard race is beautified with a masked title of true procreation, whose end is, surely, matched with destruction to themselves and everlasting dishonour to their parents and posterity. Whereof, behold here, you ladies, a familiar proof in the black picture or portraiture of this bloody gentlewoman, who, forgetting the virtue of her youth worthily renowned of all men, could not be satisfied with the abuse of her age and hoary hairs, touching the unchaste prostitution of her body, without the number of unnatural murders wherewith you may see her tyrannous hands dyed, and the innocent souls of her husband and two sons, kneeling afore the Throne of justice for vengeance of her wickedness.

If we may credit the reports of France and Italy, we need not doubt of the singularities of Provence, which the chronicles of both countries do avouch to owe nothing to any one corner in Christendom, either for the glorious site and situation of the place, fertility and plenty of everything which pleasure

or necessity can wish, rich and stately cities, builded with a form of majesty more than the common sort of towns and peopled besides with every sort of civil and courteous inhabitants. In the midst whereof is a little village called Grasse, planted, as it seems, in a pleasant vale, yielding a chiefest beauty and furniture of glory to the whole plot or circuit of Provence: for it is assisted on every part with the champaign, furnished with all sorts of delight, both of wood and water, with a glistering glee of the green meadows, who yield such a continual fertility that (if it were not the devouring jaws of their greedy cattle) a man would think they were specially favoured with a spring-time at all seasons of the year.

In diverse parts of this herbage, flourishing with blossoms of every enticing flower, shall you see, as it were, certain close arbours and open alleys, beautified with the small sprays of lemon trees, oranges, and *grenades*, offering to be thankful (with their several fruits) to strangers passing that way, with every other graft of pleasant view or taste, dispersed with such order, both in round, quadrant, and triangle form, that only nature herself is to be thought the chief workwoman in that mystical convey. Which resembleth rather a second grove or garden of Thessaly—so much commended by Herodotus, Pliny, Strabo, besides others of the poetical crew—than a place of general haunt, assailed commonly with passengers of all sorts and continually spoiled by the inhabitants, who make open war both with the buds and branches, fruit and trees, of this vale, intrenched, as it were, on every side with great hills; whose height and hugeness defends the violence of hurtful winds, and assists the natural goodness of the soil with the moisture of diverse streams, dropping out of the bellies of diverse rocks, nourished in the entrails of the said mounts.

In this Provençal paradise, then, and not far from the said town is a castle, whereof was lord and owner a noble gentleman of the country, who, in the entry of his flourishing time, married a young gentlewoman of equal honour and height of estate to himself; who, for her part, had a grace to govern the hot time of her youth with such modesty that her honest convey and integrity of life seemed to deserve no less than the virtue of Lucretia, according to the historians, or chaste abstinence of Penelope, by the fictions of the poets. But whether the secret hypocrisy of her infected mind could

no longer conceal or refrain to event the fruits of such villainy, or whether age had abated the former force of her husband, draining his sinews and veins of their ancient moisture with conversion of his sap of strength into withered humours of debility, or participating, peradventure, with the desire and disposition of such as delight in the taste of inordinate pleasure with often change of diet, having already passed the uttermost of fifty years, of a chaste and virtuous young lady, she became an old strumpet, without honesty or shame ; and whose delicate youth gave more arguments and effect of staid life, than her old age able to mortify or keep under the provocations proper only to the folly of unbridled youth—to whom alone is due the title of fond affection, with acts of small discretion.

And, as the French adage avoucheth, that of a young saint proceeds an old Satan, and a timely hermit makes a tyrannous devil, so this diabolical lady, supplying the years of her youth with loyalty towards her husband, necessary prayer and invocation to God, with due respect to the order and guide of her house, was seen to make a conversion of these virtues into a desire and effect of no less detestation than the offence of Cain or other murderer : for that, without respect to the number of her children, or view of hoary hairs with other arguments of age, she began to practise policies in love, wishing in her husband a continuance of that which nature cannot give twice to any man, and that whereof she seemed not half so desirous in the very heat of the flame which kindleth the sensual appetite, making us sometime exceed the order of reason in performing the summons of sensuality. Wherein, feeling a want in her husband to satisfy her filthy thirst, and weary already with his cold comfort in bed, she entered into device to furnish her lack that way. Whereby (as it chanced) she wrought the web of destruction to herself, with continual infamy to her house for ever. Which be the ordinary fruits of this beastly pleasure, breeding the tempest under a mask or counterfeit veil of calm seas, and then to drench the passengers when they are most persuaded of assurance. And who will not confess (by this authority both familiar and true) but love is an undoubted rage and fury, seeing he forceth and giveth fire to that which ought to quench and conquer the flame kindled first by his suggestion.

This gentleman of the castle of Cabrio had for one of his next neighbours a doctor of the laws, called Monsieur Tolonio, whom (for the credit of his learning) he used as a chief companion ; by which means, also, he had the favour of familiar conference with his wife without suspicion ; not refusing diverse times in the absence of the knight to enter the bed-chamber and consult with her upon her pillow. Wherein he exacted upon the honest liberty given him by the goodman ; for that one day (during his absence) the advocate, under colour to counsel the Lady in certain affairs touching the commodity of her husband, came to her bed-side, where he beheld her in other sort than he is wont to visit the cases of law for her husband. Neither had age so altered her complexion but there appeared folly in all parts of her face, with other enticing glees, shrouded under the lids of her alluring eyes, which, with his liberty of free access, and her contentment to admit his company, forced the rather an affection in the procurer.

In whom also as she noted certain dexterities, no less able to perform the business of the bed than to follow the process of law, so she did not only allow his amorous glances, with interest of equal glee on her part, but also (as one wholly divested of the attire of shame) made no conscience to discover that part of the body which nature hath forbidden to be seen of any, and all women of honest part ought to keep from the sight and knowledge of man. Which she accompanied, also, with such lascivious regards of wanton countenance that the dimmest eyes that be in love might easily discern the path of her intent, and judge with what feathers her arrows would fly. Wherein, also, Tolonio, no less experienced than the best, forgat not to feed the humour of her meaning with special terms of reproach against the weakness of the old man, condemning him as most unworthy to enjoy the benefit of her beauty, and much less to taste in any sort of the pleasure or delicate proportion of this Alcina ; who, to further the forwardness of her doctor, added these terms of complaint to the words of his former reproach :

" How rightly may she triumph with treble felicity in this world, who, delighting to embrace her husband, participateth indifferently with the solace of outward joy and pleasure of secret contentment ! The remembrance of whose happy state, alas ! yields the double cause of exclamation

against the debility of my aged knight: both for that his weakness denieth force to furnish the sports of the bed, and I, in the heat of desire, to wish and not find the chiefest pillar of my consolation. If I had not erst sipped of the cup of sugared delight, the desire had decayed, because I had no taste of the pleasure, where the view of former solace increaseth my present thirst and cannot be satisfied. O if nature could broach another vessel of strength in my withered husband, or restore a fresh heat to his decayed parts, my loathsome life would resume eftsoons cause of perfect contentment, and I in the meanwhile should do wrong to accuse his present weakness! What is my passion, think you, Seigneur Tolonio, proving, perforce, the want of courage in my husband, with the extreme desire in myself? He hath no other care than to mumble his morning prayers, and *Pater noster* in the night, whilst I (poor soul), half starved, attend a second frost or cold comfort in him, which rather mortifieth my desire than satisfieth in any sort the vehemency of mine appetite. And if sometime I seek to force a motion in him with endeavour to give life to his dead spirits, I am answered with hollow groans and excuses of age, that, alas, my thirst is rather increased than desire satisfied, and I forced to feed of such dry banquets, with no less grudge and grief of mind, than I should take singular pleasure in the company of one worthy of me, and able to furnish at full the appointment due in marriage."

All which the doctor was no less glad to hear than desirous to know the intent of the discourse; which he pursued in jesting sort, saying, "I am content, madam, you make a trial in this sort of my loyalty towards you and your house. Albeit I am so persuaded of the courage of your husband that, notwithstanding any impediment by age, he is sufficiently able to dispatch the affairs of the most likely and lusty gentlewoman in your train."

"Such," saith she, "as know nothing but by opinion and imagination, do commonly judge at pleasure upon matters of importance, where they that have felt the effects, and made an experience of every point, may resolve according to a truth. Wherein your ignorance acquits you, for this time, of imputation touching the loftiness of my husband; whom as you at unawares account a champion of such courage that there is no harness which he is not able to pierce, so the long

proof I have had of his worthiness may warrant you the contrary of such conceits: commending unto you, withal, the compassion of my distress with desire to procure some speedy means of delivery or release from this loathsome torment."

Wherewith master advocate began to excuse him of any intent to increase her grief, what construction soever she made of his former words; protesting withal that the offer of death should be more acceptable unto him than the simple remembrance to do her the least evil in the world. And if she sorrowed in the proof of a bad husband, his grief was no less in the very view of her languishing state, "that I wish, madam," saith he, "that my endeavour might discharge you of pain, or the spoil of my life, and all that I have of the world, confirm your quiet according to the consent of your own mind. Then should you see whether your Tolonio would put any difference between pleasant promises, which every man can make, and assured effect, which few men perform; with this further experience (if it please you to employ me) to exceed everyone of your domestical train in yielding to the summons of your commandment, albeit it import the sacrifice of my life or dissolution of honour: both which I account happily preferred if they end in the pursuit of your service."

Wherewith he seized upon one of her delicate hands, which he forgat not to honour with the often print of his mouth in sundry sorts of kisses; which, as they argued the uttermost of his further intent, so she furthered an expedition of the indifferent desire of them both, in grasping his hand with no less affection than he did amorous homage to all her tender parts, with this short question in smiling order: "If the goodness of your fortune, Seigneur Tolonio, and the sinister guide of my destinies, accompanied with the motion of love, would give you as much power over me as you seem desirous to enjoy my favour, how would you account of such preferment, or what judgment would you set of her liberal offer, who, neither respecting life nor regard to honour, is here to leave you her heart in gage and her body to the use of your pleasure?"

"Ah, madam," saith this amorous civilian, "how my unworthiness makes me despair ever to cull the fruit of so great a gain; and the fear I feel, to crave that I desire most,

yields me no less doubtful of the effect of your offer. Albeit, on the other part, the honour and felicity I imagine in the preferment hath pricked me already so full of courage that the world hath nothing of such hardness which I dare not attempt, nor anything of so great impossibility which will not appear easy in the pursuit, so that my travail may receive its hire at the hands of your bounty. Pardon me, I beseech you, in discovering that which almost I kept secret from mine own heart, and if my rashness have offended you, it may like you to do justice upon yourself, whose authority (with the force of extreme passion) hath forced me to a lavishness in the thing which I durst not determine, and much less seek to abroach in deed."

Here the shameless lady told him his last request had prevented her long meaning. "For," saith she, "you have hit the mark whereat I thought to shoot. Wherein as I am contented to impart credit to your words, with persuasion of sufficient assurance in your fidelity, so, I pray you, embrace mine offer of semblable courtesy; with addition, that your desire to enjoy me is nothing in respect of the firm opinion I have to be so wholly yours as yourself shall devise. Whereof I am here to seal the articles of assurance in such sort as you think good."

Whereupon, I think, no sort of kisses or follies in love were forgotten, no kind of cramp, no pinching by the little finger, nor his hand laid softly in her delicate dug. And she again, with her arms about his neck to yield tribute to his courtesy, was not unmindful, I am sure, to communicate in this place the circumstance of her long love, and how often she had been at point to make declaration of her zeal, with the causes of restraint till that hour: which, if she blessed according to the greatness of her felicity, he thought it a duty to honour with treble thanksgiving, performing there their first earnest of their unhappy pleasure to the indifferent contentment of both the adulterers, who there gave order for the convey of the rest of their licentious sequel.

Here, besides a consummation and effect of detestable whoredom, wherein the one with impudence obtaineth a glut of her insatiable lust, and the other unhappily yields to the unbridled will of a devilish woman, yet is the foundation laid between the two wretches to increase their offence with an act of greater sin; for besides the vice of contamination

of another man's bed, the wicked doctor agreed to a mortal conspiracy and treason against him who was neither doubtful of his honesty nor suspicious of his faith ; and whose liberality deserved a return of more credit than to weave the web of his destruction, for that his chiefest means of sustentation grew by fees and other assistance of the gentleman.

Joseph the Hebrew abstained from like act, although he was assailed with semblable importunities in the house of the prince of Egypt, desiring rather to prove the uttermost rigour of him who thought himself offended, than to sin heinously in the sight of the great God ; from Whose eyes no secret is concealed which in the end He doth not disclose, with no less justice in punishing the fault than He hath used long patience in toleration of the wickedness. Let every man behold here an experience of the malice of those that, under the veil of good learning, bolstered with a dissembled show of a certain vain knowledge and skill to discern the good from the evil and try the difference of the just from the unjust, do study altogether the perversion of justice, to seduce all good order and honesty, and abuse (under colour of honest faith) the simplicity of the good sort.

Whereof how many examples of iniquity do we see nowadays in diverse of our professors of learning, whose vanity procureth so many divorcements between the man and wife ; and yet they affirm (for the most part) that such acts are not tolerable, neither by the ordinance of God, institution of men, nor any authority in the civilian school. Besides, how many are to be seen who, puffed up with a little smattering skill in either of the laws, which rather sets abroach the humour of their vanity than confirms them in good order or integrity of judgment or living, do trade only in corrupting the good and sound parts of everyone, inducing some to sedition, others to theft, perjury, and false witness, bearing others to abandon their country and parents, with the society and fellowship of all their friends. And yet who hath a better grace than they in preferring an absolute purity of life, a fear of the laws, obedience to their sovereigns, reverence to their parents, and respect to the league of loyal friendship ?

Yea, our unhappy world, or rather the malice of our cursed time, hath stirred up amongst us such store of skilful clerks, or rather divining devils, who, bolking out a false

philosophy, have (God amend it!) infected the whole world with the air of their corruption. And not satisfied in the abuse of the mortal wretches, and seducing the fragility of man with a flattering allurement of sensuality and pleasures of the flesh, begin, by little and little, to dress war against God, with opinion to conquer that invincible Power and First Cause; Who, laughing for a time at their follies, will, no doubt, make them feel in the end (with the due punishment and smart of their fond imaginations) that neither man, nor his vain knowledge, is of any force against Him from Whose Throne we receive the inspiration and breath of all goodness, virtue, and wisdom.

Wherein I am moved to such a plainness touching the vanity of diverse of our learned men nowadays, by the sinister success and diversity of rare matters happening amongst us, and for that we see the most parts of Christendom, rather tormented by such as abuse the virtue of true knowledge with desire to incense contrariety of sects, than invaded with the incursions of the blasphemous infidels and enemies of our religion. And truly the domestical servant, in credit or trust with his master, and evil-given or affected towards his lord, is more to be feared than a whole army of enemies standing in battle array in the field.

Whereof the Lord of Cabrio may be a familiar experience, by the means of this pernicious advocate; who, abusing the lady, and she committing like wrong on the behalf of her husband, determined both (for the better convey of their abominable life) the death of the poor gentleman. Whereunto they aided the execution with more than an ordinary speed, for this villainous lawyer practised immediately with a knave of his own disposition; who, receiving some two or three hundred crowns with promise of further reward, consented to perform the meaning of his bloody request, attending so diligently the assistance of convenient time and place, that one morning he dogged the knight; who, walking in the fatal path of his misfortune to a warren of conies, a good distance from his castle, was suddenly invaded by the hired enemy to his life, with one other of equal intent; who had no sooner performed their cursed charge on the unhappy gentleman, but they retired in such secret manner to the place where the murder was first conspired, that they were unseen of everyone, and their doings known to no man.

By which means they were neither taken, and much less doubted for any such offence: neither would any have entered into suspicion either against the lady or her procurer Tolonio, considering both their former credit with the innocent now dead, and also their present sleight in colouring their late detestable treason. For the dead knight was no sooner discovered by certain passengers that way by chance, but the counterfeit image his wife (feigning a negligent care and desperation of herself) falleth without respect upon the disfigured and bleeding body of her husband, rending her hair and garments, watering his dead face with a whole river of feigned tears, and, as one thoroughly instructed afore in the office of the hypocrite, forgat no sort of feminine cries; sometime wringing her hands, with a dolorous regard to his dead body, kissing every part of his senseless ghost, and preferring sometime a sudden silence, forced, as it were, by her passion of secret sorrow, retired at last to a broken voice, with open exclamation against the doleful chance in this sort:

"Ah, unfortunate gentleman! to whose virtuous life thy destinies have done manifest wrong in taking thee away amid the solace of thy old years, with abridgment of the rest and repose expected in age, and that by a train of mortal and bloody treason. Wherein appears the iniquity of the fates, if not that, in wreaking their malice of the innocent, they dispense with the villainy of thousands more worthy of death than he that here hath paid an untimely tribute to the fatal executioner? That I would to God I might participate with his fortune in embracing in the grave the ghost of him whose remembrance will never lose harbour in the entrails of my heart, till my body lie shrined within the sheet that shrouds his dismembered corpse! O cruel murderer! whosoever thou art, what desolation am I brought unto by thy wickedness? How many floods of tears will never cease henceforth to gush and distil upon the tomb of him whom thou hast traitorously slain? What torches, what incense, what sacrifice shall not cease to fry and burn upon the altar that covereth his guiltless bones. Yea, the blood which I mean to spill in revenge of his wrong shall accuse thy villainy, and witness my loyal heart, in honouring the shadow of him that is dead by sure punishment of such as committed the murder.

"Ah! dear heart!" saith she, "kissing the disfigured carcass of the knight, "if they had been acquainted with thy bounty, thou hadst not tasted of their cruelty, or if they had had but half the experience of thy courteous inclination, as thou wast entirely beloved of all such as knew thee perfectly, they had surely refrained from slaughter, and thou enjoyed still the society of thy careful lady, who, here upon her knees, avoweth a sharp vengeance for the least drop of blood drained out of thy bleeding wounds, upon as many as were either masters or ministers in the murdering enterprise; craving also (with the tears of a desolate widow) that he that gave the mortal blow have never power to escape the danger of him into whose hands God will put the sword of revenge of the affliction of such as I am. O children! why stay your tears, in the misery of your mother and loss of so good a father? Who shall from henceforth favour your tender years with further sustentation, or defend the weakness of my widowhood against the malice of the world? What support have we left, seeing the chief pillar of our house is perished by the wickedness of others?"

Wherewith the doctor, having filled all the country with hue and cry to apprehend the traitors whom he lodged within his house, was at her elbow ere she wist; and, joying not a little in her artificial skill in playing that part of the tragedy whereof himself performed the first act, began to persuade her to consolation, and (not without the assistance of some suborned tears) willed her not to sorrow for that which could not be recovered.

"For," saith he, "seeing God hath touched your husband with the messenger of His will, we ought not to resist the judgment of the Highest, and much less argue against the determination of the Heavens: neither is there virtue in tears or complaints to raise him that sleepeth in his fatal mould. The best is to expose fruits of patience and be thankful to His goodness, Who, by the example of this affliction, warneth you and all the world of His royal power over all estates; with a ready endeavour in yourself to manifest your duty to him that is dead, in the persecution of such as shall be found guilty in the cause of your present heaviness. Neither let the view of his mangled carcass restore you to increase of dolour, seeing that, as the earth challengeth his bones as first framed out of her belly and

entrails, so I wish you to give order for his burial in sort appertaining to his estate."

Whereof the effect and expedition followed accordingly, not without the great sorrow of his subjects, who also grieved in equal sort on the behalf of their lady. Who, showing the uttermost of her cunning in crafty painting in the funeral hour, could not be holden from falling into the grave, which she watered on every side with the tears of her eyes, craving that she might make a sepulchre in her own breast to shrine the body of her husband, or at least that it might be lawful to burn his bones, to the end she might consume by piecemeal in drinking the ashes, as Artemesia did the scorched relics and cinders of her dear Mausolus.

Ah! deceit and devilish hypocrisy of a woman! What enchantment so strongly made, of which thy subtlety cannot undo the charm? What armour of such force, that is not found too weak to resist the strength of thy malice? What medicine of such virtue which can prevail above thy infection? What train, what treason, what mischief or murdering cruelty is able to compare with the villainy of a woman unhappily divested of the attire of reason and virtue, which for the most part are, or ought to be, most familiar with that sex? Wherein appeareth an evident proof of the venomous policy in a woman, if the outward appearance of an extreme sorrow (the heart rejoicing with treble contentment within) do not declare her deceitful disposition? What hypocrisy is greater than to suborn all sorts of tears in the eyes, with every other sign of counterfeit dole in the face, when the inner parts, laughing at such feigned shows, are in the midst of their banquet for pleasure? What offence is it to plague them in earnest, who seek to blear the eyes of all the world with charms of painted substance? Or rather, why should they be suffered to live whose villainous lives and doings were able to deface the glory of the whole feminine sex, if the virtue of so many chaste ladies were not of force to answer the combat of all sinister reproach, and conquer the infamous challengers of their renown?

But now, the funerals performed to the dead Lord of Cabrio, the lady, albeit she dismissed by little and little the greatness of her dolour, yet she ceased not her diligence in the search of the murderer, nor forgat to promise large hire to such as could bring her the ministers of the fact.

There was public information and secret inquiry, with every point and circumstance so sifted to the quick, that there lacked nothing but the confession of him that was dead, which was impossible to be had, or the testimony of the bloody parties, which were the commissioners appointed to enquire of the murder ; whose hands smelled of the blood of the dead innocent. Whereupon the matter was hushed for a time. In which Tolonio was not idle to ransack every secret corner in the house, not forgetting (I think) to visit the treasure he chiefly affected, and for a simple pleasure of the which he had been so prodigal of his conscience ; who, yet not satisfied with the sacrifice of innocent life, stirred up desire of greater sin.

For this tyrannous widow had three sons, whereof as two of them were continually in the house, so the eldest, jealous (not without cause) of the familiarity between his mother and her doctor—whose haunt he judged to exceed the compass of his commission and limits of honour—could not so conceal nor digest the conceit of that which persuaded a stain of infamy in the forehead or forefront of his house, but that he thought to belong to his duty to impart unto her the cause of his suspicion, with persuasion, in humble sort, to be indifferently careful to keep her former glory of virtuous life, and curious to defend the remainder of her years from worthy crime, or spot of foul imputation. Wherein the increase of amorous glee between the advocate and her procured a more expedition than he thought ; so that, having one day the assistance of a fit time and place, in a gallery void of all company, he preferred his opinion in this sort, not without an indifferent medley of shame and disdain appearing in all parts of his face :

" If it be a thing unseemly that a king should be disobeyed of his subjects, it is no less necessary, in mine opinion, that the prince avoid oppression of his people by power ; for that a great fault in the one is none offence at all by reason of his authority, and the other sometime is exacted without just cause of blame. But if it be a virtue in the majesty royal to be indifferent between the force of his power, given him by God, and the complaints of right in his vassals, why should it be an offence that the master or magistrate be put in remembrance or made to understand the points wherein he offendeth ; seeing he hath no greater reason to yield justice to such as deserve punishment, than bound in double sort to

a wonderful care of integrity in living in himself, so as his authority and effects of upright conversation may serve, as a line, to lead the meaner sort, serving under his awe, to be in love with his virtues and commended for semblable sincerity and purity of life? But for my part, good madam, were it not the remorse of an equal respect to your reputation and honour to all our house, and that my conscience hereafter would accuse me of want of courage and care to make good the virtuous renown of my dead father, I should hardly be forced to the terms of my present intent, nor my being in this place give you such cause of amaze and doubt of my meaning.

"For the duty which nature bindeth me to owe to the place you hold on my behalf, and the law of obedience given by God to all children towards such as made them the members of this world, makes me as often close my mouth against the discovery of the long grudge of my mind, as I have great reason to impart the cause to your ladyship; who is touched more near than any other, that I would to God the thing, whereof my mind hath given a judgment of assurance, were as untrue as I wish it both far from mine opinion and void of a truth. Then surely should my heart rest, discharged of disquiet, and I dismissed from the office of an orator; which also I would refuse to perform if the importance of the cause did not force my will in that respect. Albeit, as the passions of the mind be free, and the spirit of man (howsoever the body be distressed with captivity) hath a privilege of liberty touching opinions or conceits, so I hope your wisdom, with the justice of my cause and clearness of intent, are sufficient pillars to support that, which the virtue of natural zeal to yourself and dutiful regard to the honour of my ancestors moves me to communicate with you; chiefly for that the best badge of your own life, and blood of your late lord and husband, my father, be distressed (as I am persuaded) by the secret haunt and unseemly glee of favour between the procurer Tolonio and you, whom God and nature have made a mother of such children that neither deserve such lewd abuse in you, nor can brook his villainy in corrupting the noble blood wherewith they participate, without vengeance due to the greatness of his poisoned malice.

"Wherein, good madam, as my dear affection to youwards hath made me so frank in warning you of the evil,

so, if you give not order henceforth for the redress of that which I account already past every cause of doubt, you will come too short to cover that can be no longer concealed; when also small compassion will be used in the revenge of the injury. Neither can you in any sort complain rightly of me, in whose heart is already kindled a grudge of the wrong you have done to the nobility of us all, loathing withal the simple remembrance of so foul a fault; protesting unto you for end, that, if hereafter you become as careless of the honour of your children, as heretofore you have been void of regard to your own reputation, the world shall punish the abuse of your old years with open exclamation against your lascivious order of life, divesting you of all titles of high degree; and these hands only shall send master doctor to visit his process in the infernal senate, and preach in other pulpit than the highest theatre within the castle of Cabrio."

Which last threats argued a more mortality by his terrible regards of countenance, with broken words in his mouth, declaring sufficiently the vehemency of his passion. All which as they persuaded the lady to dread a speedy execution of his anger (wherein her Tolonio should be chiefly distressed), so, being void of remedy in any fear she could prefer, she retired to the policy of feminine complaints, seeking to moderate the fury of his just choler by certain suborned tears, and other dissembled arguments of dolour, wherewith she seemed to fill each sinew and vein about her, continuing some space in that sorrowful contemplation, with her face upon the ground, casting dust and ashes upon her head (according to the desperate Persians, when they received any lamentable news), and rising at last (as out of a qualm of heavy passions), replied to the exclamation of her son with these, or such like, terms of counterfeit compassion:

"Were it not that innocence is a virtue sufficient of itself to answer all combats of unjust imputation, I should sure doubt of assistance in the defence of my cause, and much less be able to clear the sentence of your sinister conceit against me. Neither had I reason to argue with you, and less cause to enter into terms to justify myself, if in mine own integrity appeared not the absolute wrong you do to my present honour. And yet do I feel myself indifferently passioned between doubt and fear; for that your present choler, quarrelling with all offers of defence on my side

seemeth also curious to admit any credit at all in whatsoever I shall prefer to approve my guiltless life. For if it be a virtue to be credulous in every report, you have reason to continue your grudge, or if the view of your owe eye had brought you to the sight of that wherein you presume a truth but by imagination, you were sufficiently absolved if you had already performed the end of your mortal enterprise; but where your eyes argue against you (as partakers at no time of the likelihood of any such evil you have presently imagined), and yourself void of other witness than the information of your own partial conceit, let strangers be judges between the causes of your suspicion and the hard sentence you have passed of mine honour, and all the world that was privy to the course of my youth (when you were under the yoke and years of discretion) accuse the wrongs you do to the virtue of mine age, whose hoary hairs cry out of your present cruelty.

"Alas! who is he that dare undertake the defence of this desolate widow, if mine own children seek to set abroach my dishonour? What state or degree may be bold to repose credit with assurance in mine honesty, when the fruit, congealed of the substance of myself, seemeth doubtful of my upright dealing? What expectation of faith, loyalty, or good opinion is in any sort of strangers, when the blood and blossoms of our own entrails enter into conspiracy against us? Our miserable condition, and unhappy sex of ours, subject most (as it seemeth) to strange wretchedness, when we account ourselves past the fear and malice of Fortune; who now, I see, beginneth her troublesome war, when we repose most felicity and assurance in rest! It is now, alas! that I find an experience of the common voice of the vulgar sort, confirmed also by consent of the ancient crew of the learned, that virtue is continually assailed with spite, envy, and false imposition of crimes.

"Neither am I alone persecuted with the malice of all those mischiefs, although I only am oppressed with a present villainy, whereof I never thought, and much less performed, any effect. How long, alas! my son, have you joined in opinion with that fond sect, whose rashness in judgment hath made them oftentimes repent the sentence of their folly? Since when have you been so lightly persuaded of the reputation, constancy and virtue of dames of honour? Do you

measure their disposition by the vanity in yourself, and villainy of such as credit only the instinct of their malicious brain? No! no! it is not the endeavour of ladies of my regard to practise in sensuality, nor study in the vain delights of the flesh. And, for my part, methinks discretion should persuade you that the time and number of my years are not convenient to the follies whereof I felt no motion in the very flame and burning summer of my youth.

"You grieve with the familiarity between Tolonio and me, but chiefly because we use conference now and then in my chamber. Do not you know it is he by whose counsel are guided the whole affairs of the house; or do you see his liberty enlarged since the death of your father, in whose time he practised in sort as he doth now, and yet was he never jealous of his access hither at any hour? Had he not eyes to discern as far off as you, and his ears were as open to all reports as yours? Albeit he used discretion in judgment: neither could his heart, I am sure, digest half the villainy you have alleged if his surmise had been confirmed with a truth. But here, alas! appear the points of my wretchedness, to fall into the danger of suspicion with him in whom I have reposed the quiet of my old years, and for the increase of whose wealth and patrimony I am in continual travail, both of mind and body. Wherein as the poor Tolonio (no less unfortunate than I, for that your grudge seemeth most heinous on his behalf) hath equal care to advance you by his advice and travail; so, besides your abuse to me, whom God and nature binds you to honour with all duty, you do double wrong to his faith and zealous intent towards you, in returning his honest care with threats of no less mortality than shameful and cruel death: which, if it come in question by your rashness, what doubt bring you of his honesty, where now his name is of credit with the best of the country?

"And, for his part, if you give him the least inkling in the world of your displeasure, I warrant you his presence shall no more offend you in the house nor elsewhere, and then shall you know whether the favour he finds at my hands imports a meaning for your profit, or to satisfy the pleasure of my vile and aged flesh: besides, the order of your affairs, both at home and in the senate, will try the difference between the commodity of his presence, and hindrance that is sure to happen by his restraint of coming

hither. When, my son, will also appear the care of your dear mother; whose diligence alas! deserveth better consideration than to be charged with the note of incontinence, which I protest afore God, with stretched hands and heart to the heavens, to have in no less contempt for the vileness of the sin, than I see the wrongful conceit of such a villainy doth trouble you."

Which she forgat not to accompany with all sorts of sighs and signs of dolour, intermeddled with such regards of dissembled pity in all parts of her face, that, albeit he was past all doubt touching the truth of his own conceit, yet the tears of his deceitful mother moved him to admit her excuses, with such compassion of her sorrow that he seemed also to pass the pangs of her present passion; with protestation, under terms of great humility, that he grieved no less in that he had said, than she had great reason to complain of the wrong he hath done to the renown of her virtue. "Albeit," saith he (with a countenance of repentance), "if you measure the force of my affection with the cause of my late plainness, your discretion I hope will conster my words according to the honest intent of my heart, with excuse to my rashness; which you shall see hereafter so mortified in me that I will neither be so hasty to accuse, nor suspect without better advice."

For the which she seemed thankful unto him, with a present appeasement from anger, attending the offer of opportunity when she might prefer her son to a part in the tragedy which her wickedness had already begun upon his late father; for she was doubtful still of the young man, and gave less faith to his words.

Wherein certainly appeareth an experience of an ordinary custom in the wicked, who poiseth the infidelity of others in the balance of their own injustice and want of faith. For the tyrant doubteth to whose credit to commit the safety of himself, because his cruelty is hatred of all men; neither doth he good to any, if not for the respect of profit, or to perform some malicious attempt. Wherein, as they consider the affections of their people by the passions in themselves, so, in passing their own life in continual fear, they procure like terror to such as be conversant with them, making the disquiet of others equal to the misery of themselves. Like as this new Megaera or tyrannous monster of our time; who, no

more satisfied with the blood of her husband than glutted or cloyed with the continual pleasures in whoredom, with her detestable Tolonio, determined to rid the world of her innocent son, to the end their villainous trade might pass with more assurance and less cause of fear or suspicion of any. For the execution whereof her wickedness devised this speedy and necessary means.

There was within the castle a high gallery, boarded underfoot with certain planks, fastened to rotten planchers: whereas the young gentleman used his daily recreation in walking, by reason of the delightful air and pleasant prospect upon diverse fields and gardens, so the tigress his mother reserved that place as a most chief and mortal minister in the death of her son. For she and her pernicious procurer, one evening, knocked out of either end of diverse of the planks the nails that kept them close to the plancher; in such sort that the next that happened to make his walk there should have no leisure to discover the treason, and much less live to bring report of the hardness of the rocks growing in the ditches under the said gallery. Which chanced unhappily to the son of this she-wolf; who, no more happy in a mother than his father fortunate in a wife, renewed the next day his accustomed walks in the vault, where he had not spent three or four turns but his destiny brought him to tread upon the fatal boards; which, having no hold nor stay to rest upon, disjoined themselves with the weight of the unfortunate gentleman, who, falling suddenly upon the rocks, with his head forward, was bruised to pieces, being dead indeed almost so soon as he felt the apprehension of death.

Who would have judged such treason in a mother to work such an end to her son; or noted such want of pity in any of the sex as to see the seeds, sprung in her own flanks, deformed and hewed in pieces upon the edge of sharp and piked stones? What misfortune to the son, and villainy in a mother, seeing the title of a son ought to be so dear, and name of a mother is so delicate and of such virtue, that no heart, of what metal soever it be made, is not mollified and doth homage to that dignity! Yea, everyone holdeth his blood so dear, that the beasts themselves, by a provocation of nature (although other ways insensible) have such affectioned regard to their fawns, that they fear not to contend against every peril of death to defend their young ones from danger. What greater

felicity hath man, travailing in the stormy sea of this world, than to see, as it were, a regeneration of himself in his children with a plentiful and gladsome increase of his seed? For which cause, chiefly, God ordained the holy institution of marriage, not respecting altogether the mortifying of the ticklish instincts of our declining flesh, but rather of regard (as the apostle affirmeth) to keep the society of man in order, making it appear pure and acceptable to the great Monarch, the first Founder of so noble a work. But to return now to our history.

This imp of the infernal lake and hellish lady, being already despoiled of all affection and duty required in a woman towards her husband, detested, also, every point of charity and zeal which nature challenged in her to the fruit flowered within the tender parts of her entrails, whose fall and miserable death, as you see, filled immediately every corner of the castle with desolation and tears: some weeping in the want of their brother; others complained the lack and misfortune of their kinsman, the view of whose dismembered body stirred up also a fresh sorrow on the behalf of their late lord; but all their dolour was nothing to the howling and cries of the detestable murderess, who intermeddled her grief with such arguments of desperation, that her sorrow seemed sufficient to make the earth tremble, and move the heavens to tears; neither seemed she to make other account of the world than a place of most loathsome abode. By which masked semblance of outward heaviness, she covered an inward joy at her heart, and by this policy of painted dole she bleared the eyes of the simple multitude; who, after the retire of the heat of their lamentable storms, consulted upon the burial, with general consent, in the end, that the innocent stripling should be laid in the tomb of his unfortunate father, to the end he might participate with him in the fatal pit, as he was equal to him touching the malice of his mother.

And now, as this bloody lady had in this sort discharged (as she thought) every doubt and fear hereafter—chiefly for that she stood no more in awe of any censor or spy to keep a calendar of her faults, whereby she used less care in the convey of her beastly traffic with her viperous advocate—so, notwithstanding, her second son, grudging still in the death of his brother, and somewhat doubtful of the cause, began to be jealous in the points of his mislike; and, being of equal courage to his brother, and of no less nobility in heart,

could not also digest the view of dishonour, specially in the highest degree of his house and affinity.

Whereof he gave declaration in his stern countenances to Tolonio, to whom if he spake at times by any occasion, his words argued the disdain in his heart, using unhappily the like regards and terms to his mother, who, not liking to have any tutor to note or control her villainy, and hardened withal in the execution of flesh and life, judged it no offence to imbrue her hands with the blood of this innocent, and paint every post and postern of her castle with the brains of her posterity, resolving immediately upon the fatal conspiracy against her second son, swearing his death with her execrable minister Tolonio, who undertook the charge with promise to perform the effect. Wherein he used the means and expedition by him who first distressed the father. For this reverend lawyer, rather studied in the philosophy of Satan, than traded in the skill of the ordinances of kings and emperors, or experienced in matters belonging to the senate, so conjured the murderer with persuasions and proffers of reward, that he admitted the bargain and gave assurance of the consummation. Wherein he failed not of any point or article.

For certain days after, the gentleman, being a-hunting upon certain mountains environing a hollow and low valley, as his men were busy in rewarding their hounds with the paunch and entrails of certain chases they had killed, their unfortunate master reposed himself upon the edge of a steep and high hill, whose descent imported a perilous regard by the deep and hollow vault in the valley, replenished on every side with sharp and hideous rocks. Here, as he accounted himself most sure, and furthest from cause or effect of treason, he found great danger with stroke of mortal destruction; for that the hired minister of his death, tracing his steps all the day to find an occasion fit to further the end of his business, refused not the offer of so convenient a means and place. For as they were in familiar device together, the one dreading no harm, and the other attending the assistance of the devil to perform his wickedness, stepped of a sudden behind, and thrust the unhappy gentleman from the top of the mountain to the bottom of the valley, where the sharp rocks, receiving him without respect of innocence, made morsels of his guiltless carcass.

What difference may a man set between the desolation of this house and misery of the succession of Atreus the Greek, whose children were cruelly cut in pieces? The wife of one of them surviving, a noted woman of all the world for unchaste life, becomes in the end the murderess of her husband, by the assistance of the adulterer and defiler of their marriage bed; and she, with her ribald, oppressed at last with vengeance equal to their offence, by the hands of her own son. What pity is it to see an experience of such examples amongst Christians, and in this age, yea, in the place and country where the regard of parents towards their children is such that they make no conscience to hazard their own lives to defend the health of such as nature hath given them for succession; where this execrable imp of infernal procreation, born for the scourge and plague of her posterity, respecting more to conceal and aggravate her wickedness, than careful anyway to repent her sins, delighted as it seemed, to sprinkle the earth with innocent blood, which cried vengeance both against her and her companion of these horrible murders; according to the judgment of the great God, Who keeping a true reckoning of every drop of blood that hath been spilt, since the death of Abel the just until the last affliction of as many as have been, or shall be, unjustly persecuted, punished, or murdered, by the malice of the wicked, provideth commonly that such act of detestation receive end by the discovery of the life passed of such infamous wretches.

Whereof, behold an experience in this cursed lady! Who, after the funerals of her younger son, seeing that all her servants kept eye and watch upon her with suspicion of her vicious dealing, imparted the whole to the gallant her minion, who consulted and concluded immediately the end of their pleasures and exercises of blood together; which was to marry one another. Wherein albeit appeared a difficulty, for that Tolonio had already a wife no less wise, fair, and virtuous, than he cruel, spiteful, and vicious, yet it seemed not impossible, for that the wicked man accounteth a facility in everything which he esteemeth either reasonable or lawful. He determined, at what price soever it were, to make her play a fourth part in the former tragedy of the father and his two sons; imparting his bloody resolution to his beastly trull, who, no less assured in such evil than ready to make a minister

in the attempt (as the common villain that stirreth not from the straits of mountains, stripping every passenger not able to resist his force) allowed the device with special request of expedition in the accomplishment.

All which, it is to be thought, the covetous doctor did not devise with intent to perform for the respect altogether of love or friendship he bare to whom he goeth now about to marry; for he considereth that men, for the most part, embrace traitors, to make their profit of their inventions and subtleties; which when they have wrested from them, either the traitors be punished by death, or at least so disdained that their misery in living showeth the undoubted difference between virtue and vice, disposition of an infidel or one that esteemeth not his faith, and he that is careful to keep his conscience clear from such spot; so Tolonio, not ignorant of the large revenue and great sums of money of the Lady of Cabrio, with store of other wealth about the castle, accounted it a commodity to exchange the life of his wife for the filthy use of so great riches; meaning, notwithstanding, to enjoy the spoils of so plentiful a prey, and after to send her packing and make her pass by the path of so many murders committed both by the one and the other.

O unbridled covetousness, and execrable desire of unhonest gain! How hast thou bleared the eyes and understanding of men nowadays, hardening their hearts against the dread of God and fear of His laws! What mischief hath overwhelmed us by thy means; seeing the father is jealous of the faith of his son, the wife doubtful of her husband, the neighbour fearing ambushes of treason in his next companion, and the prince, oftentimes in danger of his safety, being beset on every side with the guard and ministers of money; which hath such force over the fragility of men, that sometime the servant conspireth against his lord to enrich himself with the spoils of his master; the son grudgeth in the long life of his father, because he keeps him from the use of his possession; and some we see procureth the death of him for whose life and preservation of health he ought to be in continual prayer.

Neither doth the malice of that wickedness rest altogether in the hearts of the temporal, but there be also of the sacred sort infected with the poison of that venomous worm; who, the more she groweth in strength and force, the greater

misery do we feel, that unhappy is that world which participateth with so hurtful an air. Wherein, if this abominable desire of gain have power to dissolve that wherein God hath forbidden a separation by man, and nature bound us to an equal care and zeal as to ourselves, I see not what way we may take to find assurance of faith and loyalty; nor under what climate may be found any which imitate the simplicity of our ancestors; seeing the malice of our age exceedeth (in that respect chiefly) all corruption that ever hath been noted amongst the most infidel and cruel barbarians that either live now or have been in any time afore.

And so to our murdering Tolonio, who, building a thousand castles in the air upon the complot made for the despatch of his wife, was not able to resolve upon any certain means touching the execution. For seeming, as they say, to hold the swine by the ear, he was loath to let her go, and doubtful which way to keep her without danger to himself. Sometime he was of opinion to work the fatal means by poison: wherein appeared absolute peril, for that himself was ignorant in brewing the confection, and the assistance of an apothecary was denied, in that he dreaded a discovery in imparting the mystery to a stranger. He practised with him who (as you have heard) served his turn in the slaughter of the father and sons: wherein albeit he was deceived, and the destiny of his wife rather deferred than her punishment forgiven, yet the day of her fatal date seemed to approach.

For that, as he half despaired in the fidelity of his former executioner, touching this third attempt of blood (wherein, also, appeared a difficulty in the act, for that the chaste lady stirred not much out of her house), so, reposing much for himself in the assistance of the spirit that guided his intent, he abandoned the aid of any man, and committed the effect and circumstance to his own hands; by whom was performed the fatal consummation, the night following his conference with the hired traitor, when he strangled her in bed with a napkin of thin holland wound fast about her neck. And as she was in the extremity of her last pang, he cried for help, avouching with a troubled countenance (to the servants that came to the rescue of their dead mistress) that it was the sudden fall of a cold rheum, with superfluity of phlegm, that had forced this mortal suffocation in his wife.

Which was easily believed of his men, and had so stayed without further inquiry of the case, if God had not awaked with the noise of the cry of the aged man her father, who the same night supped with his daughter, and left her in as good estate as she was ever afore. In whom the consent of the destinies of Tolonio and the justice of the Highest seemed of indifferent operation in the view of his tragedy; for that, notwithstanding his tears and sorrow, he gave diligent regard to the face and throat of his daughter; whereof the one was swelled and puffed up with black blood, and in the other appeared a circle or print of the thing that wrought the effect of her death.

Whereupon followed a secret judgment in himself that she was distressed by mortal violence, and the defluxion that smothered and stopped the conduits of her breath were the hands of her husband or some other by his appointment. Wherein, notwithstanding, he was so constant in dissimulating his opinion for the present, that he forbare, as then, to give any show of his grudge, attending a more fit time and opportunity for the revenge of so great a villain, and that to the terror and example of all ages, touching such heinous abuses to their honest wives. Whereupon, willing his son-in-law to consider of the obsequies according to the merit of both their houses, he said he would go procure the company of diverse of their friends in the city, for the more pomp and better furniture of the funeral.

Wherein as the advocate busied himself to provide every ceremony and circumstance due to the burying of the dead, with more joy, I am sure, in the act he had done than repentance for the sin; so the old man, his father-in-law, converted into heaviness with just occasion of revenge, complaineth him to the judge criminal of the place, with request to come view the most detestable part which ever erst hath been performed by any; "and whereof," saith he, with a number of aged tears watering his hoary beard, "you will have compassion, if you be not as far from the gift of pity as the Athenian Timon, who, for his disposition of cruelty, was called the common enemy to the courtesy of man."

Whereunto the magistrate consented, as well by the duty of his oath at his election, as desire to behold with his eyes the cause of the old man's complaint, whom he followed (with his number of sergeants and officers-at-arms appertaining)

to the house of Tolonio. Where, if he marvelled with the view of the dead body, and disorder in doing the act, he was moved to double amaze with the dolour of the old man uttered in these terms:

"If the view of strange and horrible things move cause of wonder to the rude and barbarous sort; or experience of undoubted extremities have power to procure remorse in the hearts of such as participate with the gift of pity and pure religion, I commend unto you, sir, the misery of my old years, weeping in the wrong of my late daughter, whose ghost you may hear cry out for revenge of its wretchedness that forced her life to such mortal violation. And albeit the terms of my complaint may at the first seem to import a doubt of the truth, and scarce meritorious of compassion, yet, in the indifferent view and consideration of the matter, will appear the justice of my cause, and iniquity of him that hath so mortally wounded my heart, that I fear it is also of force to commit me to deadly execution. Whereof I rather wish to have made a former proof, than to stand here to lament the dolorous tragedy of my daughter, whom, sir, I say and protest with wringing hands, to be traitorously strangled in her sleep by this detestable murderer, my son-in-law.

"Behold, sir, how the signs and marks of murder do avouch his villainy; and witness the extreme pangs she endured afore he had wrought the full force of his execrable act. Besides, the whole household are to justify her state of perfect health in the beginning of the evening, when she went to bed to him, which, with other circumstance, argue, alas! an undoubted truth in the effect; neither had she other rheum, catarrh, or disease, than the violent hand of her husband, who both brewed the broth and ministered the cup of suffocation to my dear daughter. On whose behalf, behold the tears of pity in my withered face; which shall never be dry, nor cease to distil, till the sword of your justice, sir, have given the blow of revenge to her wrong, and desolation of me her wretched father.

"Stay not, sir, to take away a continual calamity in my house, and purge the whole country of an infection of general slander in the cruelty of this husband, more barbarous towards his chaste wife than the tyranny of the tigress or she-wolf on the behalf of their mates or young ones. Persuade yourself, alas! that God is ready with the reward

of your act in His hand if you do reason to this oppression. Where, if you refuse to yield justice to my rightful request, behold how the heavens disclose themselves to rain the shower of vengeance upon you and your posterity. Neither had these hands refrained so long the dismembering of his cursed parts, if the virtue in your oath and office had not been my warrant to have justice by you."

Whereupon followed such sighs and passions of sorrow that they prevailed above the force of further speech, moving the judge to such remorse on the behalf of the murder, that, what with the silence and other drooping arguments of guilty conscience in Tolonio (who albeit was an orator of sufficient eloquence in the senate, yet he made no one simple offer of confutation to the old man's complaint) and resolution of physicians who gave sentence against him, with judgment that her life was forced to leave her by the main strength of man, he caused the sergeants to apprehend him, sending him forthwith to embrace the bottom of a dungeon, in place of his pretended marriage with the widow of Cabrio, whom he thought to make lieutenant of his bed in the absence of his wife.

Whose corpse, the next day, was laid in the place of public view, not without great dolour in every degree of men ; who if they cursed to the deepest pit in hell the author and minister in the death of so virtuous a gentlewoman, it is no need to move question of the general desolation amongst the women, who, knowing her husband to be the only worker of the villainy, grudged that he had the favour of an imprisonment, with general cries to the senate to commit him to the extremity of every torture without respect of compassion. The body was carried with funeral pomp to the college church there and laid in her tomb, with such sacrifice and ceremonies of sorrow, that who had seen their order everyway, would have thought it had been the obsequies of the common mother of their city.

In which meanwhile her father pursued his process with such diligence that the prisoner was heard ; who, confessing (without question) the circumstance and effect of the murder, was sent (by reason of the horror and strangeness of the fact) to the court of parliament of Aix, afore whom the case was debated at large. Which being imparted to the Lady of Cabrio, who only was privy to her own conscience and knew

herself guilty of all, began to fear that which fell immediately —I mean that Tolonio would as well discover their long practice together in lust, with the sundry murders in her house, as he had willingly confessed the oppression of his wife.

Whereupon, thinking it sufficient to be warned by the threatening of a storm of the approach of a tempest, and withal that it was a point of wisdom to prevent the mischief afore the evil did fall, gathered up as much money as the shortness of time would give her leave to recover, with such jewels as were of light carriage, and trudged in sudden and secret manner to the castle of Poggetto, belonging to the Duchy of Savoy ; whilst the poor Tolonio was pinioned and trussed with cords, and sent to the noble city of Aix (which bare long time the name of her founder called Sextius, a Roman gentleman, and termed of the Latins by reason of the baines of hot waters there—Aquæ Sextiæ) : where he avouched eftsoons the points of his former confession, with the discovery of his unchaste trade with the Lady of Cabrio, the abominable murders, the occasions of the same, and the names of them that assisted the bloody execution.

Whereupon, the sentence of that court dismissed him to Grasse, to be pinched with the extremity of every torture and rack appointed to torment offenders. From whence he was restored to the place of his nativity, where, being in prison and knowing what judgment the law had given of his life, began to acknowledge his former abuses with tears and other arguments of repentance, appealing upon his knees to the majesty of the Highest, with this lamentable invocation :

" The view of my former offences, O Heavenly Father, quarrelling with my present remorse, persuades small hope of absolution at Thy hands, if in the benefit of Thy mercy, appeared not absolute assurance of the forgiveness of my sins. Neither do I despair in the virtue of my humble submission, considering Thou hast affirmed (by the mouth of the apostle) that no repentance can be offered so late which Thou wilt not thankfully accept, so that it proceed of the humility of the spirit, and be armed with true contrition of heart. And albeit, O merciful God, the whole course of my wicked days hitherto hath passed without either care of the commandments or fear of Thy laws ; yet, seeing it is now Thy pleasure to stop the race of nature and fragility in me, it may also please Thee to put me in the number of

those to whom Thou hast promised forgiveness of their faults, at what hour soever they mourn and lament their sins. Suffer me, O Lord, to participate with the comfort of the thief hanging on Thy right hand, who, albeit never acknowledged his wickedness till the last hour, yet his repentance was allowed of Thee; in that when he said, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom,' Thou made him a fellow-citizen with Thyself in the joyful paradise.

"And as Thy bounty and goodness exceedeth the greatness of any offence, so I beseech Thee suffer Thy mercy to wipe away the wickedness of me, most miserable and wretched sinner, for the love of Thy dear Son my only Saviour; Whose body passed the torments of mortal affliction upon the cross to give life to them that were dead in sin, and blood sealed the articles of reconcilement and forgiveness of sinners; amongst whom, as I confess mine own abomination to exceed the most heinous offences that ever were, so I humbly crave to be absolved by the benefit of Thy mercy, and that Thou forbear to enter into judgment against my soul. Respect not, O Lord, the number of my faults, for that they exceed computation, nor deal not with me according to the greatness of the least of them; for that (without the assistance of Thy special goodness) hell is the reward and merit of my wicked life. Which I wish may work a warning to all degrees of equal disposition to myself, that, although they feed for a time of flattering pleasure or favour of this world, yet seeing their iniquities in the end are discovered by themselves, whereby they are sure to receive (with me) the hire of their evil by an infamous death, I with them stand in awe of the infallible Judgment, and pray with the prophet to participate in the general satisfaction which the death of His Son hath made for all flesh, fallen for want of grace in the first man, whose faults have been already purified by the blood of that most innocent Lamb into whose hands I commend my penitent spirit."

In the end of which prayer he was drawn out of the prison and led to the theatre of public execution, where he received the reward of his bad life by a worthy death, to the special contentment of his father-in-law, and general joy of all the ladies and gentlewomen of the country, except the miserable widow of Cabrio, who, being adjourned and not appearing,

accordingly was condemned and executed by figure, according to the custom in France in that behalf. Whereof she was made to understand by some secret spy, who also warned her of the diligent inquisition and means that were made to find her, to the end justice might pass upon her. Whereupon, doubting either assurance or safety at Poggetto, went to Genoa with one man only called Jacques Palliero, who, somewhat jealous of the coming away of his mistress, or rather fearing in the end to be partaker of the punishment of her wicked life, made no conscience one day, as she was in her devotions in the church, to rob her of every part and parcel of her money and jewels, with other necessaries, saving such as she wore about her ; which was such a cause of secret and fretting grief for the time, that she was at point to admit the offer of despair.

Albeit, being already entered into repentance, and judging that misfortune of little or no value in respect of the infinite abuses of her former time, she gave God thanks for His visitation, and entering into device for means to support the residue of her years, addressed her to an ancient widow ; to whom as she accounts her present necessity, proceeding of the villainy of her man—without any mention, I am sure, of her detestable trade passed, or cause of her present being there—so she found such favour in this matron that, in respect of her show of honest behaviour and gravity, arguing her descent from nobility, she committed unto her the government and bringing up of her daughters. In which trade she ended very poorly, albeit with more honour than she deserved, her unhappy days.

Here you see the misery of this wretch, who erst hath commanded over a household of servants, and gentlewomen at her beck, is now brought to live under the awe of one inferior to her house and calling ; and who, passing her youth with all pomp and delicate nurture, and now drawing to the end of her years, is forced to an experience of continual exile, subject to the will and pleasure of another, and pressed (as she did indeed) to die out of her country, without the company or comfort of any of her friends to close her eyes, or couch her bones in other shrine or sepulchre than by the appointment of strangers.

Wherein certainly appeareth rightly the infallible judgment of God, Who forsaken of such as yield honour to their

proper desires, suffereth them also to fall in such sort, that in the end they are constrained to confess their faults, with detestation of their sin, when they feel His just vengeance poured upon them. Like as it happened to those miserable or rather murdering lovers; whose end, notwithstanding, I account very happy, seeing they were not void of repentance in the last hour and moment of life. And truly he is sufficiently blessed, the eyes of whose mind, in the last and fatal hour, be not dimmed with the darkness of infidelity and obstinate desperation, seeing it is upon the body and souls of such that God thundereth the fire of His anger and flame of immortal fury.

Behold here the end of the impudent love of these adulterers, the fruits of so detestable a tree, and the fortune of such falsers of their promise and oaths made in the face of the Church. And here you may see the commodity that commonly attends the villainy of such as unjustly spill the blood of their neighbour, seeing that God hath willed by His divine providence that tooth for tooth, and eye for eye, be taken from him who (without the consent of the law) offendeth his brother; in whom appeareth the lively image of our Saviour, who hath also forbidden by special inhibition the violation of blood by murder, and every thought and effect of adultery and whoredom, but chiefly the unhonest embracing of the wife of our neighbour, who, once united with the body of her husband (whereby of two moieties are made one whole and entire heart) doth abuse and dishonour the bond of their sacred league, if she but wish, and much more enjoy, the company of any other in unlawful sort.

TENTH TALE

LUCHINO AND JANIQUETTE

THE ARGUMENT

AMONGST all the passions which nature stirreth up to disquiet the mind of man, there is none of such tyranny or keeps use more in awe than the detestable humour of covetousness, and raging appetite of whoredom. Whereof as both the one and the other engender fruits of semblable fury, and expose effects of equal evil, so he is of treble commendation that, being possessed of the first, doth rather abandon his goods, than, in pursuing the suggestion of his insatiable desire, seems to procure willingly his own torment in this world, with assured danger to his soul in the day of general account ; and vanquishing the second, which erst had the only awe and dominion of him, he leaves a glorious remembrance of immortality to his name, and dischargeth his conscience of a heavy and irksome burden. But if the desire to win great treasures makes the noble mind forgetful of the regard of his honour, with constraint to do things not worthy anyway of the title of virtue ; or if (according to Virgil in his second *Aeneid*) this greedy thirst after gold is of force to corrupt the hearts of mortal men and fill them full of all infection, it is nothing to the power of the sensual appetite, which, once taking possession of our inward parts, God knoweth what fruit it brings forth, forming us in a frame of brutality nothing inferior to the insensible sort, according to the Greek orator, saying that, when a man giveth himself to the pleasures of the flesh, he makes exchange of the excellence which he participates with the image of God, and becomes of form and likeness to a beast without understanding. Wherein also the wise king of the Hebrews, amongst his sundry sayings of wisdom, wills us to remember that the lips of a whore be sweet, distilling drops of honey, but the operation exceeds the bitterness of gall, and is more sharp than the sword that cuts with two edges, warning every man to shun that sugared evil as a pestilent air. " For that," saith he, " the man that escapeth such passages, besides that his life is free from

infinity of dangers, leaves an honourable remembrance of his virtue to all posterities."

And albeit the great Roman Captain, Scipio Africanus, chief vanquisher of the enemies of his country, hath left an immortality of his name by his dexterity in arms and art of war, yet is his glory no less by the continency he used toward a princess of Spain, taken prisoner, amongst others, in one of his battles; whose beauty albeit seemed of force to allure the most staid and assured heart that was, and he, frying in the flame of youth, not exceeding the twenty and fourth year of his age, did not only abstain from violation of her body, with semblable inhibition to all his captains, but also returned her with pomp due to her estate to her husband, whom also he dismissed into liberty without ransom or other exaction. Whereupon the Spanish prince, Indibilis, so embraced the alliance of Rome, that he only assisted, not long after, the empire in the conquest of Spain.

The great Alexander, albeit he was more given to sensuality than stood with the honour of so worthy a prince, yet forbore he to do wrong to the chastity of the mother and wife of the great monarch Darius; albeit, they being his prisoners, their honour and life were also at his disposition. Only he had not such credit in his own continency as the Roman Scipio; for that he durst not once come where they were for fear their beauty would force him to a forgetfulness of noble virtue, where the African had always conversation and conference with the Spanish lady in his tent.

And because we may be bold to intermeddle the renown of our own time with the glory of antiquity, let us give no less commendation to Francesco Sforza, sometime Duke of Milan, a man of singular fame for a captain of our time; who, according to the chronicles of Italy, was presented with a young maid of rare and exquisite beauty, by a soldier of his which reserved her life at the sackage of a town he had won by assault, and, albeit he was young, full of wanton humour, and nothing degenerating from the Italian inclination touching the desire of the flesh, yet, being at the point to assail the castle of her honour, upon her humble petition for the safeguard of her chastity, he delivered her without any wrong to her virginity.

All which examples as I must confess to deserve everlasting memory, and they that have used such virtuous abstinence

meritorious of immortal commendation, yet I cannot compare their doings with the virtue of him who, thoroughly galled with the arrows of love, having long courted a young and fair damsel, tasted of every passion which may anyway pinch the heart of him that is plunged in affection, and desiring nothing but the reward of love which gives end to the amorous sorrows, after he had spent many nights in hollow dreams, consumed the days in uncertain imaginations, wept, sighed, and otherways tormented himself in the pursuit of his mistress; when his desire was of greatest force, and his hope ready to convert itself into despair, being sued unto, and having power over her who erst might have commanded him and all that was his, checked the humour of his former appetite, and dismissed her without the loss of the least jot of her honour. Whose example methinks makes blush all others which erst have been preferred as patterns of continency; for that in overcoming himself, he did not only refrain to lay hands upon her, who yielded the use of her honesty rather by necessity than provocation of affection, but also, embracing her rare assurance in virtue, relieved her want no less plentifully than if she had been his sister, bred in the womb wherein himself was conceived. Of such one do I mean to discourse in the history following, as more virtuous and worthy of praise than either Scipio, Alexander, or Sforza. Wherein notwithstanding, I refer the judgment to such as have vanquished the force of affection by semblable virtue.

The records of antiquity and monuments in Genoa, making a particular description of divers accidents happening to the noble house of Vivaldo, have left a special note of one Luchino (being of the remainder of that race) who, succeeding his parents in patrimony and possession, was nothing inferior in all respects of honour and virtue, and exceeded them in all liberal disposition and gift of bounty, detesting the niggardlike order of the Genoese, who, gasping more often than they get meat, do commonly rise from the table with an appetite, and make clean their teeth when they fill not their belly; like as also the hungry Spaniard, who, being at home, can live of a little, but feeding of another man's trencher, his throat seems as wide as the devouring ostrich, and is able to match the greediest Fleming and greatest epicure in Almain.

He being thus the only heir of his house, roving already amongst the massy bags of his father, who left him the keys of his golden coffers, set abroach immediately the frank disposition of his liberal heart, and, opening all the gates of his palace, denied the repair of none. Whereby he summoned in short time a lusty train of gallants and glory of youth, more apt to hunt the chase of his spoil than likely to preserve his patrimony; whom (as one not much overcharged with care to keep that he had, nor covetous in desire to augment the legacy and leaving of his father) he used as his chief and familiar companions in the pursuit of his pleasure, I mean in the practice of exploits of chivalry on horseback, wrestling, leaping, and other exercises of activity, with a thousand changes of recreations of delight, and pastimes incident to young gentlemen; who, finding the care of the world hurtful to their young and tender inclination (and having wherewith to sustain their prodigal vein), do pass the short time of their green years in the only imitation of pleasure. Wherein this young heir of Vivaldo took such large pennyworths, and was assisted with so long a time, that he seemed to lack nothing to make him appear happy in this world, but a dispense from above to defend him from the dangerous snares and prison of love; who, albeit is blind and of small force, yet is he ordained to interrupt the ease of men, with a special grudge and common hatred to the excess of felicity in our youth.

And because there is nothing on earth that is continually happy, and that it is necessary to know the causes why we are of the world—I mean to be touched sometime with a change of our fortune, and passion of hard digestion, as well as we seek to taste of the delicates of ease and wallow in continual pleasure—so I think, that even as covetousness and greedy desire is the ordinary torment and continual *bourreau* that troubles the mind of the old man; even so, love is an impression of disquiet, which nature hath sown in the hearts of young men, both to restrain in time the raging folly of youth, and (according to the order of the pinching frost killing the buds of certain trees and flowers that appear during the violence of his time) to chasten the abuse of their long pleasure with a rebuke of no less sharp disposition than almost unsupportable for the tenderness of their discretion. Which love, being blind of himself, seems also to use as small

regard in the disposition of his affairs, with less discretion in knitting the affection of those unhappy wretches which he brings to draw under the yoke of his awe.

Whereof our age swarms with examples, which I am content to dismiss for this time, by reason of the superfluity of the same, and refer you to the sequel of this Luchino, who, dandled as it were upon the lap of folly, and served with nothing but dishes of delight and pleasure, could not bear so even a hand upon the bridle of his affections, but, ere he wist, he let slip the steady rein of his liberty, and became extremely in love with a simple maid, whose beauty he accounted of more price than herself or parents, noble by descent or other special assistance of fortune. And, albeit his personage and living, with the estimation of other gifts which nature had lent him above the rest, seemed sufficiently able to make him meritorious of favour of the best lady of a country, yet love (having neither respect to his race nor regarding his greatness) did close his eyes from the view of such as were able to answer him in equality of descent and virtue, and converted his heart and affection to the contemplation of a simple maid; whose name, albeit is not of such veneration as Camilla and Lucretia, whose high titles only do import a certain semblance and credit of honesty in the person of a public courtesan, yet her chastity, with womanly government, deserveth no less commendation than the most approved of ancient time.

For being the daughter of a poor man, she grudged not with the portion of poverty, but thought it a principal virtue to embrace the lot of her state with thankful contentment, and be careful to relieve the hard condition of her parents with the honest endeavour of her hands. She made not her beauty a looking-glass for the world, but studied to be worthy of so precious a jewel. She would not suffer her body to be pampered with delicacy, lest her mind should be subject to the infection of evil; nor give any place to the alarms of the flesh, lest the same should prevail above her resistance. And being of the age of fifteen years, her modesty was of no less admiration, serving as a lantern to light all the ladies of Genoa, than her beauty (without a second) able to allure the best assured of a country.

Whose first view and simple regard brought such sudden astonishment to the lofty mind of this Luchino, that, after

he had compared the secret mystery which nature had hidden in her face, with the special gift of seemly behaviour bestowed upon her by God, his heart seemed enchanted, and eyes as limed with the glance of her looks, not able to withdraw their regards from the contemplation of so perfect a beauty; which was not set out to the sale, by any artificial means of painting, or assistance of powder, or other vain experience of divers of our counterfeit maskers nowadays; neither did she seem to prefer any suborned bravery for the advancement of so precious a dowry; either by superfluous frizilation of the hair, twinkling of the eye, wringing of the lip or wresting the chin, mincing or measuring her pace, as though her joints were out of tune or tied together with points, or other lewd gestures devised by the courtesan, and practised as a principle and chief grace at this day by divers of our delicate and wanton dames; who, not weighing the due merit of so precious an ornament, and less worthy to wear so rare a badge of nature, do abuse the goodness of them both, in converting the only gift of God into a detestable means to aggravate sin.

And receiving thus the first summons of love, whose arrows, being feathered with the wing of affection, do leave the heart wounded with a burning desire to pursue the instigation of our appetite, he found himself too weak to abide any more alarums. Albeit, striving a little at the first to defend his liberty, with the intent to answer appeal to the uttermost of his forces, he brewed the broth of his own bale and renewed the torment of his passion in such sort, that there were few days in the week wherein he performed not his pale-walk afore the lodging of his fair Janiquette; whom, if by any adventure his roving eyes did spy at the door, he forgat not to salute with no less humility than if she had been one of the greatest ladies in Genoa, courting her besides with a low reverence, and other offices of dutiful civility, in no less reverend manner than if he had presented his service to the greatest princess of Italy.

Which also drove the girl into some amaze, as one not experienced in the order of such amorous greetings, and less used to be saluted by any gentleman equal in calling or condition to Seigneur Luchino; whose fame, as it was great, both by the authority he bare in the city, and reputation of his living, with other gifts and ornaments of nature, so it drove her into double astonishment to conster the meaning

of his new courtesy. Albeit, leaving the divination of his intent to a time of more leisure, she retired to the virtue of her good nurture, for the which she was no less meritorious than embraced (as you see) for her beauty ; and drawing the blood of seemly shame into her face, which set such a gloss of natural white and red of her complexion that her colour seemed to be dyed in the dew of the fragrant morning of May, and returned his courtesy with a salutation of semblable humility. Wherein he rejoiced with more contentment of mind, than if the Queen of Spain had yielded him favour to kiss her hand.

But what need he tickle himself to make himself laugh, or why did he not eschew the presence and place of his enemy, rather than seem so subject to the summons of his eye, to whom love hath given the gift of flattery to deceive the rest of the parts? For if at first he had corrected the flickering report of his eyes, his heart had been free from desire, and he not at the brink of passion and torments ; and if at the beginning he had abandoned the place, he had also dismissed the rememberance of that which now hath bound him to pursue the quest of his own disquiet. Neither doth he other thing in visiting the place where she is, than throw water upon hot embers, which doubleth the heat, and forceth the flame with more expedition ; for the more he beheld her, and the less she regarded him, the greater grew his affection, giving treble increase to his desire.

And albeit she was neither fine in attire, set out in robes of rich array, nor decked with apparel for the decoration of her natural beauty, yet appeared she no less precious in the eye of this gallant than if she had been trimmed for the nonce in the same order that the poets feign of the brown Egyptian, when she was brought to lie with the Roman captain, Marcus Antonius. He failed not to reiterate his haunt with an ordinary trade to the street of Janiquette, resolving his common abode or place of stay right over against her lodging. Which increased her doubt of that mystery, till nature, that discusseth the darkness of such doubts and brings the most rude creatures of the world to be capable in the arguments of love, revealed unto her the meaning of that riddle, saying that the rounds and often turns, with veiling of bonnet, which the proud pirate made afore the door of her fortress, was no other thing than the enticing

harmony of the Sirens, or other tale, to allure or make her pliable to the appetite of his will.

Wherein she was the rather resolved for certainty, for that, within short time passing that way, he imagined a stay right over against her house; where, feeding the time for the nonce in device with one of his friends, he gave scope to his eyes to peruse with continual contemplation the majesty of his mistress, in such sort, that one of her companions exercising also the use of the needle, encountered by chance the greedy regards he cast to Janiquette—to whom sait she:

"Thou art little beholden to the goodness of fortune that seems so great an enemy to the merit of thy beauty; for if thy condition or calling would admit the advancement which the present preferment of nature doth offer thee, no doubt thou shouldest become in short time the honour and decoration of all thy house. For touching the resolution of mine eyes and judgment of my conceit, proceeding of the devouring regards yonder gentleman casteth towards thee, he is not only the bondman of thy beauty, but also so addicted to the service of the same, that only thou, Janiquette, may dispose of him, his honour and life, and all that he hath. And truly thou art not so happy to be the controller of so noble a champion, as of little discretion if thou make small account of his service, which the very greatest dames of our province would reserve as a special relic or jewel. Neither oughtest thou to make thy beauty of such price as the respect thereof should prevail above the goodness of so great an offer; seeing that the walls of this town do inclose a number of young ladies and gentlewomen, that, exceeding thee in beauty and bringing up, would not seem curious in admitting the benefit of so good a fortune."

Whereunto the honest Janiquette, that neither took pity of his pains, nor allowed his endeavour, and less liked the persuasions of her companion (who, peradventure, boarded her so far to make a proof of her honesty), replied, no less wisely than with more discretion than commonly we note nowadays in one of her years:

"If I were born," quoth she, "under the influence of fortune, or bound to abide the sentence of her doom, I were not unlike to perform the expectation of thy allurements; but seeing I am derived of a contrary constellation, mustering

always under the ensign and colours of virtue, I have my safe-conduct at all times to withstand the invasion of such infections, with authority to defy the malice of any such accident. And touching the commendations which you seem to give Monseigneur Luchino, both in the title of honour, estimation of his public authority in the affairs of this city, together with his dexterity in all gifts incident to a gentleman, I say the more plentifully he is considered at the hands of God with a singularity in such ornaments, so much the more ought he to study to seem worthy of so rare a participation; not converting the virtue of his talent given him from above into a sinister intent, and disposition of wickedness, to seduce the chastity of simple maids, whose faults—if any be—he ought rather to reprehend with severity, than minister corruption contrary to the commission of his honour. Neither shall he at any time, I hope, prevail so over my beauty, as the use of the same shall give him other contentment than a friendly *bonjour* of the mouth (which all honest maids may do without prejudice), thinking the friendship of nature of no greater moment in giving me the title of fair, than the virtue meritorious in preserving the same (according to the merit) without spot of infamy or worthy reproach of the world.

"For her offence is double afore God," saith she, "and treble scandalous in the mouth of the multitude, that exchangeth her beauty, being a chief sign and argument of grace which God hath painted in the face of a woman (as the philosopher saith), for any other price, how great soever it appear, than the honest pawn and gage of lawful matrimony; according to the institution of our Saviour, Who, allowing chiefly the oblation of chastity, doth condemn the contrary into peremptory destruction. And what have we in this world that we ought to make so dear account of as our honest name, being the thing that yields us not only an admiration whilst we enjoy the use of life upon earth, but also makes us live after our death with a perpetual commendation of our integrity to the remainder of our race?

"Dost not thou know, my dear Marion, that, in the sweet and dewy mornings of the spring, there appear certain flowers no less delightful to the beholders, than yielding an odoriferous smell with an enticing desire to be gathered, so long as their fragrant and fresh perfumes endure; but when the heat of the sun (perching the gallants of Aurora)

shall pierce through both bud and root, and mortify the lively hue of such brickle creatures, the flower is not only forgotten and loathed, which erst was so much embraced, but the desire of all men taken away, as though there never had been any such. Likewise the glistering apple, growing upon the high sprays in the pleasant lands of Anjou, seems a thing of great delectation to the eye, and of no less pleasant taste, so long as it is entire and without corruption ; but after the worm hath either made a breach, or its greenness or pleasant maturity lost its force, and converted into a rotten ripeness, its beauty decays with desire any longer to keep it.

" Even so a maid, what poverty soever oppress her, so long as she keeps unspotted her surname and title of chastity, is not only admitted, but also may challenge, place amongst the best of a country ; but when the caterpillar hath once cropped the leaf and devoured the bud, the tree doth not only die and perish with infamy, but the remembrance of such stock and fruit remains in the records of reproach to the opening of the great Book of general account, when all faults shall be revealed and punished, according to their disposition and quality. And sure it is better for a woman, of what degree soever she be, to die with honour, and bury the burden of honest renown with her body in the grave, than, enjoying the fruition of life, to be marked of the multitude with a note of general rebuke : which (as a moth in a garment) will not cease to eat and devour her present estimation, and make notorious, besides, every age of her succession by the desert of her disordered life, losing the only cause that makes me joy in myself with so great a desire to live.

" Wherein, because I may the rather perform the effect of this last resolution, I will first, with an unfeigned heart, make invocation to the Highest for the assistance of His grace, to guard me from the assaults and peppered provocations of the flesh, and then cut off all such occasions as may eftsoons advance the suggestion of the same, or seem anyway an impediment to the vow I have presently made : which I doubt not will be arms sufficient enough to repulse the alarums of Seigneur Luchino, and raise the siege which I see he hath planted against the fortress of my chastity."

Wherein she omitted not the execution : for, from that instant, she kept herself unseen of any but her friends and

kinsfolks, coming little or nothing abroad, and less willing to be spied out of windows or stand at the door ; leaving thereby an example worthy of imitation to all estates and sorts of women ; but specially such gigs and prattling housewives as cannot content themselves with the air of the house, nor give one prick with the needle, unless she sit at the door ; as though her exercise were only to maintain chat with the street walkers, or keep a standing and make challenge against all comers.

Which is the thing that you mothers and tutors of little girls ought chiefly to respect in the direction of your tender charges, I mean to bridle and bring up your pupils and imps, that have folly tied on their backs, in the awe of correction ; and if they transgress the order of good government, you must not forget to offer them the rack and torments of the rod ; which you must minister unto them in the greenness of their years, and afore the tenderness of youth, with want of discretion, will suffer them to discern their own inclination. For as the philosopher termeth them to be a kind of cattle more apt to decline than any other reasonable creature ; so (saith he), if they get once the bit between their teeth, and crop of the herb of riotous will, it is harder to reclaim them, either by awe, fear, or compulsion, or gentle entreaty, than the wild haggard or rammish falcon by any cunning or devise of their keeper. Besides, as a maid is a jewel of no less great price than rarely to be found, so she is a vessel most brickle and easy to be broken ; and being once either cracked or corrupted, she liveth in none other account than in common wonder of the people and pointed at of all the world.

Wherefore, you mothers, that in the bringing up of your daughters will give a show of your own virtue, with no less care of the honour of your children, must forget to pamper your younglings with presents of their wills, or dandle them upon the lap of dame folly, but feed them rather with the discipline of good nurture, not sparing the order of due correction, lest you spill the future hope and expectation of their well-doing. And better it is to have a maid smell of honest simplicity, using a temperate silence in her tongue and order of talk, than (Italianated in legerdemains of subtlety, and pricked full of the feathers of foolish pride) to have the tongue of a popinjay, babbling without order or

discretion: for that the one is a virtue of itself, and the very line to lead her to advancement; and in practising the other, she procures a discredit to her parents for their negligence in their education, and herself but laughed at in the company of wise and discreet dames, and (that which worse is) led by such guides into the bottomless pit of everlasting infamy.

Remember the advice of Marcus Aurelius, who, writing of the slippery disposition of some women, with instruction to abridge the peremptory humour which nature hath given them, gives this general charge to all governors of nurseries and tutors of little girls, that they stand so surely upon the guard of the honour of their charges, that they neither be seen out of windows, stand as stales at the door, suffered to visit any place of the ordinary haunt of men, called to secret conference without commission or company of their keeper, but also barred the access and presence of all men; for that (saith he) the ill cannot be utterly prevented, unless the causes that may procure it be clean taken away; neither is it possible for a lady to keep the reputation of her honour that makes herself incident to the haunt of great companies, with desire to be a common feast-maker and visit every banquet. And the more she is invested with honour and high calling, the more care is due to the preservation of so great a title, and less liberty or licence is enjoined her to range abroad or seek to satisfy the appetite of her pleasure, and her fault of treble slander in the mouths of the blasphemous number: which albeit is without the compass of my history, yet I thought it not unmeet to note this little remembrance; both to warn them that use less care than is necessary to prevent so great a mischief, and to wish all ladies to account their honour as the gift of God and special ornament of their life.

Which I would enlarge with copy of authorities, if I had the assistance of convenient time and consent of my history —willing me now to repair to Janiquette; who, persuading great impossibility in a young maid of enticing beauty, desirous to encounter the amorous glees of men, and keep caquet with all comers, to escape either without some great fault in the abuse of her body, or at least to leave occasion of suspicion and jealous opinion of her honesty, among such as use commonly to record the life and doings of great ladies, sought to prevent the like accident with a contrary virtue; for keeping herself for the most part within the house of her

father, she barred the access of Luchino, and closed her eyes from the view of his presence.

And if at some time her affairs required her to visit the door, and Luchino by like chance reiterated his appeals, with semblable summons and salutations of accustomed courtesy, she fixed her eyes upon her work, dissembling not to see the thing which her heart could not brook and her eyes detested to behold ; and doubting that under the veil of that masked humility, and kind of courting not convenient for her calling, might lurk some secret mischief and displeasure of double consequence, she seemed to abhor both one and the other with equal detestation, and converting his sighs into air, and tears to pay him the hire of his folly, she seemed only to supply the whole time of her being there in the company of her companions ; leaving poor Luchino no less amazed at these new toys and tricks of a haggard, than at the first he took pleasure when she requited him with semblable glee.

All which, notwithstanding, could neither discourage him from the pursuit of the resolution of his mind, nor put him in despair of his future fortune, thinking that time would remove the veil of her rigour and convert her into a creature more pliable, assisted therein with the opinion of such as, accounting small conquest of things gotten with little labour, do yield the greatest glory to that which is won with the extremity of time and travail. And being still nourished with the hope of victory, renewed eftsoons his promenades and pale-walks afore her door, advancing himself so far forth sometimes, that he entered into device and discourse of love ; albeit so coldly that the same neither declared the importance of his desire, nor bewrayed the present passion of his mind. Whereunto, notwithstanding, she gave so slender regard that her reply dismissed him with no less contentment for the present, than likelihood of better success hereafter.

It is a custom amongst the Genoese and all the province about, that the young men, having posies of flowers, and meeting their mistresses in the streets or elsewhere, may present them therewith, without any mislike or cause of suspicion of the people ; being, also, a note of no less courtesy for the woman, having flowers in her hand or bosom, to make like return to her servant : which kind of courting the amorous Luchino forgat not to prefer as a testey of his service

and furtherer of his suit. For watching long time the haunt of his mistress, he found her at last, not only alone and void of company, but in place convenient to put his long request upon terms: which greeting of fortune or gift of happy chance, if it were welcome to him, I leave it to the judgment of such as, languishing in the like disease, dare neither discover their grief nor demand their due remedy. And having (of purpose, peradventure) certain gillyflowers in his hand—which were of more price because winter raged then with extremity of cold, the chiefest enemy to flowers and tender buds on the earth—he saluted her with his request in this sort:

"If the continuance of my service were able to warrant me at length the merit of the same, or the offer of any hope in the meantime had virtue to procure moderation to any passion, the one should not end but by the sentence of death, and the other would I embrace as a special preserver of my life. But seeing the one is of no less moment with you than the other unlikely to happen, I am driven to exclaim against your beauty as the only cause of my grief and entire enemy of my rest; but chiefly the unnatural vigour which you suffered to rampire itself so deeply in the entrails of your heart, and seal your eyes of compassion against me, that you will neither admit my tears, sighs, and other pitiful regards without number—whereof the pale complexion of my face, with other trembling joints of the exterior parts, have made sufficient declaration—nor credit the infinite symptoms and thundering alarums, which the only glimmering view of your beauty ceaseth not to minister to the weak forces of my feeble heart; who, as your prisoner, ready to resign the keys and castle of his liberty, is here become the pitiful solicitor of his own cause, conjuring you by that compassion which ought to accompany so rare and precious an ornament of nature, to remove at last the veil of your former cruelty, and, in beholding what power love hath given you over me, to dismiss all delays of comfort, and admit me into your service, that have vowed never to depart out of the least of your commandments."

Whereunto she was driven to answer, rather by compulsion of the place and time than any desire to debate with him in a matter of such vanity:

"The merit of your service, sir," saith she, "is far greater than I can or may grant his due need, and your

passion like to be restored by her that is ignorant of the cause, and less knoweth the order of your disease. And touching the rest of your protestation, coated rather with arguments of illusions and subtle ceremonies to seduce with simplicity, than any resemblance of virtue or intent to expose the fruits of true affection, I cannot answer with other terms than just disdain of your liberal offer, with little care you use to the reputation of mine honour. Neither is it to me that you ought to address this ambush or train of allurements, considering the inequality of our houses denieth a consent of marriage; and to grant love to one that craves it in other sort than the institution of that sacred law doth allow, I think it no less detestable afore God, than a spot of perpetual infamy, which time itself cannot raze out of the remainder of my house. And small honour is it for you to pursue a quest of so little avail; whose beginning, as it proceeded of a superfluity of fond humours, raging without reason or guide of virtue, so the continuance will import but a discredit to your calling, and the end yield you neither contentment nor commendation.

"Wherefore, I pray you, suffer the assurance of my virtue to work her force; who, in correcting the running appetite of your folly, will make you master of yourself; and let not so vain a thing as the simple glance of beauty (which is more apt to decline than able to endure) prevail above your ancient estimation of honour, nor draw you without the limits of and bonds of your calling: for, for my part, I have enclosed mine honour and life together in one vessel, with intent to make a present of them both, at one instant, to Him Whom I beseech may take away your trance, and restore you to your entire, and defend me at all times from the invasion of so pernicious an enemy."

"What!" saith he (not without some argument of choler), "do I seem altogether unworthy of your favour, or am I not likely to perform the offer of my service?"

"Both the one and the other," quoth Janiquette, "for I ought not, nor will not, pass a grant of my good-will to any but such as the law of the Church and consent of my friends shall enjoin me to marry: neither can you do a greater wrong to your own estimation, than in embasing your greatness, to become the servant of so poor a maid as I. And albeit you were contented to make an equality, and indifferent

distribution of the greatness of your estate, with the little estimation that fortune hath preferred me unto; yet the grudge of my conscience, quarrelling with the foulness of the act, will neither suffer me to admit your offer, nor consent to your request, desiring you, for end, to exchange your intent and make a present of your service to some other that knoweth how to requite so great a courtesy better than I; for I neither like your phrase nor circumstance, and much less determine to spend any longer time with you."

Wherewith, albeit he began eftsoons to reply with the offer of his flowers (which she refused), she whipped into the house, and shut the door upon the nose of her amorous client; who became so amazed with the suddenness of the fact, that he seemed as one new fallen out of the clouds or dreaming of the dissolution of the world. At last, being past the mystery of his trance, he repaired to his house with his head full of proclamations; where, entering into a war of new devices, he seemed to double his torment, not able to imagine the means to win the good-will of the maid, who seemed no less hard to be plied than the sharpest and most steep rocks upon all the coast of Spain. Love had so infected him with desire to enjoy her, that he could have persuaded himself to have married her, if it had not been for the impediment of his parents; whose displeasure he knew would stretch so far, that they would not stick to destroy the maid, to the end the note of such a fact might be utterly extirpated and rooted out of the remembrance of all ages. Besides, the estimation of himself appeared also as a stay to his meaning, and the authority he bare in the city of no less effect to dissuade him, and yet the poison that first infected him, prevailing above the force of any persuasions, presenting him eftsoons a new hope to cull the maidenhead of Janiquette, declared unto him that both she and her parents were the children of poverty, and that there was no door so strong but a golden key might open his lock, nor fortress of such strength, but he would yield to the offer of money.

Wherefore, restored to a fresh hope with the offer of this new device, and desirous to see what these ministers could do by their art, he addressed him to one of his neighbours, of no less familiarity than great trust with Janiquette; whom he so conjured with the charm of his pleasant tongue, and certain pieces of gold that marched between them, that she promised

to become the solicitor of his cause, and give such a charge to the maid, that she should not find such cunning to confute her reasons, as she seemed valiant in the repulse of the assaults of her lover; whom, because his messenger should not depart unarmed at all points, he willed her to be no niggard of large promises, offering whole mountains of gold, silver, or jewels, or any other thing of what price soever it were, that seemed anyway able to pierce her, and make her pliable to his desire. "And if she be assailed," saith he, "with the common fear that troubles all women—I mean if she doubt the swelling of her belly—assure her, that I will not only marry her to her contentation, but make her portion worth a thousand ducats."

His neighbour, albeit her art was not to deal in messages of love, and that she esteemed greatly the chastity of maids, yet, comparing the poverty of Janiquette with his present promise to relieve it, gave him eftsoons a second assurance of her diligence, with protestation to make her strike sail and come under his lee. Wherein she was deceived; for neither his large promises nor presents of great price could persuade her, and much less the oration of the messenger, who uttered the cause of her coming in this sort:

"Recording, my girl, the hard condition of thy present state, I find the same more subject to a climate of long continuance, than in hope or apt to be relieved by any industry of thy parents; who albeit have heretofore enjoyed the goodness of fortune, and borne a port of honest calling, yet thou seest they are now in the danger of desolation, and fallen so far into the malice of poverty, that they want means, not only to supply the needy disposition of their own life, but also to prefer thee to advancement due to thy deserving. I grieve no less also to see the flower of thy youth slip away by such stealth, and the pining misery of thy parents to be an impediment to the preferment of thy beauty; which, albeit, is honoured of a number with the offer of marriage, yet, when they have sifted thy state, and tried to the uttermost the small inheritance and simple dowry of thy father, they do not only disclaim their suit, but seem to depart and break off, as though they were infected with some contagious disease of your house. Wherefore, seeing the despair in thy parents' ability takes away all hope of assistance at their hands or by their means, and that

fortune once in the course of our life doth put into our hands the offer of a good turn, if thou wilt repose thyself upon my advice, I will see thee in better state than ever was the best of thy house."

The maid, doubting no treason in her old neighbour, with less expectation to hear that which she imagined least, enquired her opinion.

" My advice," saith she, " I know will drive you into some amaze at the first, as a thing neither convenient for mine age nor seemly for my calling, and disagreeing wholly from mine ancient order and custom of doing, albeit, if thou make a care of thy profit, thou wilt not stick to pursue the benefit of thy fortune ; neither will my counsel import such prejudice for the present, as the sequel in short time yield thee a tribute of treble profit. I have heard of late that there is a young gentleman in this town, so extremely in love and desirous of thy beauty, that he accounts nothing so dear as the thing that may like thee, and yieldeth detestation to that which thou loathest ; neither would he spare the massy store of his treasure, or large revenue of his living, nor stick to make the peril of his life the price of thy good-will and favour ; with this addition, also, that if thou wilt make him the master of his request, and pass a grant of that he requires, to provide the marriage to thy contentation, with the dowry of a thousand ducats ; whereof I have commission to make thee assurance. Methinks a fault done in secret is half pardoned, and one offence brings no custom of sin. Wherefore, use thy discretion, and think that time will dispatch thee of him, when thou mayst return home loaden with the spoil of his riches and jewels."

Here Janiquette, suppressing the just cause of her anger with a marvellous modesty, not commonly seen in one of her calling and bringing up, seemed, for the only respect of the old years of her neighbour, to close her mouth from open exclamation against her lewd abuse ; and answering with more moderation than the importance of her wrong required, replied in this sort :

" What villainy can be greater than to make a common merchandise of that which ought not to be bought but by virtue ; or what disposition of more detestation in any Christian than for a woman to make a sale of her honour, and measure so precious a jewel by the price of her profit ?

Do you think that either the view of riches, or jewels, or prodigal offers of large promises, are able to do more than the long offer of service, with general commendation of the gifts that be in him which hath suborned you to prefer this embassage? Or who is she of so villainous a nature, to withstand the sundry alarms of tears, with pitiful summons of so many sighs, and yield at length to the detestable herald of all corruption? No! no! If I had liked the bargain, my consent had come freely, without the earnest penny of filthy marriage, which you seem to prefer, with an offer of a dowry, confirmed by an assurance or warranty of your commission. Is it possible that, yielding him the flower of thy virginity, to make a profession of true friendship to any other, but that the blood of shame will renew the remembrance of my former fault? Sure if he prevail so far, and win that point of me, the place shall be several to himself, and the breach not entered by any other.

"Neither shall he triumph long in the victory, nor I live to lament the loss. For as it is the true property of a pure maid to defend that ornament to the uttermost gasp of her breath, and if, by destiny, the force of the oppressor prevail above her strength, to persecute him to death with the loss of her own life; so, if I be not able to perform the one, these hands shall be the bloody ministers of the other, to the great contentment of me and open shame of him that shall survive: for it is long since I was persuaded that an honest death is the renown of the life passed. For the rest, to the end the present wrong you have done me may serve, hereafter, to stay the course of your rashness in the like affairs, with promise and protestation to proceed no further in like dishonesty, I pray you persuade yourself that, if you conclude and knit up the latter remainder of your years in the practice of abominable endeavours, the commendation of your life passed will be converted into the title of a common bawd; swearing unto you for my part, by the faith of a pure virgin, that if it were not for the respect of the honesty I have hitherto noted in you, and honour that I owe to the old years and virtue of your age, I would so publish your doing, that your present message should reproach you in what company soever you come."

Wherewith she so choked her old neighbour—that was not so mystical in the convey of such trades as divers of our

chandlers and superstitious basket bearers in London, who not only make a profession of bawdry, but live by the filthy gain proceeding of that art—and having nothing to reply desired Janiquette to pardon her, alleging that the care and compassion she had of her poverty procured those terms rather than any desire to seduce her. And so departing with her short shame and less profit, made particular relation of her success to the amorous Luchino, who, hearing the sentence of despair, seemed no less passioned with present dolour than if he had been sharply assailed with a fit of the burning fever. He entered straightaway into the pageant of a madman, pacing his chamber with uncertain steps and throwing his arms across upon his breast, with his eyes directed to the heavens, began to imagine how to pass the mystery of this trance. Which sudden silence served chiefly as a special supply to restore the war with contrariety of his thoughts; for the more he went about to extirpate the remembrance of his mistress and commit her to utter oblivion, the more he made himself subject to her beauty, and grafted more strongly the roots of affection in the bottom of his heart.

And sure it is no small matter for a man that is in love, pursuing the good-will of his lady with continual importunities the space of two or three years, and receive nothing but the offer of a vain and uncertain hope; which feeds the mind with such suggestions and arguments of good success, that every repulse seems to present a flattering favour, and the breath of every rigorous word imports an enticing allurement, until despair (blowing the retreat of that war) do publish his commission to dismiss all hope and likelihood of future success.

The large fields environing the great city of Genoa seemed to lack scope and compass to comprehend the multitude of thoughts, with diversity of imaginations, that even now occupied the head of Luchino; who, exclaiming upon the haggard disposition of his mistress, forgat not also to forge cause of complaint against love; for that, as a blind guide, he had led him into the bottomless gulf of fancy; and leaving him there, ready to be devoured with the raging waves of affection, would not show him the way to come out, and eschew so great and present a peril. Albeit, he ought rather to have reprehended his own simplicity and weakness of spirit, which (with the want of assurance in virtue) made him

subject to that which all wise men ought to govern with awe and correction—I mean the sensual appetites and provocations of the flesh, which are, or ought to serve as, slaves to the place and house of our reason.

Luchino, prolonging his passion with an increase of disquiet, seemed to fall from complaints of dole into terms of fury; and, feeding altogether upon the herb and appetite of rage, suffered himself to be so much infected with the humour of frenzy, that his wrath was turned into woodness: wherein, as the desperate lover doth seldom measure his sleep by the length of the nights, so he seemed here to exceed the ravenous order of the greedy wolf hunting his uncertain prey in the dark; for sometime he rolled upon a bed, and sometime wallowed upon the rushes in the floor, and now and then, for a change of exercise, he tried the hardness of the posts with the knocks of his head; and albeit he had the liberty of a long gallery, with five or six chambers to rove and run at his pleasure, yet, judging the same not circuit sufficient to contain the circumstance of his passion, he committed one part of his discourse to the witness of the air, within a fair garden, yielding prospect to the window of his gallery; where, making invocation to the moon (as the lantern that then gave light to the earth), craved that she would open her vessels of pity, and let fall some drops of consolation in a shower of moisture, to quench the burning heat of his torments; which he thought were thundered upon him rather by the sentence and doom of his angry destiny, than as a desert and due merit of his own folly.

And being in despair to despatch himself out of that danger, he confirmed here by experience the opinion of the philosopher, who, treating *de fragilitate humana*, describeth the gates and forefront of the palace of mischief to be painted with allurements and enticing provocations to enter; "but, being within, you fall," saith he, "immediately into the pity of torments worse than the gulf or lake of hell; neither can you have safe-conduct to retire at your pleasure"; arguing, hereby, that it is far easier to fall into the hands of danger than to purchase a dispense of peril, and that the diseases be more ordinary and common than the remedy ready to restore the patient.

It was both pleasure and pity to hear him quarrel with his fortune, with complaint of his mishap, sometime blaming

the simplicity and faintness of his courage in yielding his heart prisoner, and himself captive to so mean a personage, and to convert the benefit of his former liberty into a continual care and desire of a beauty less durable than the flickering gloss of the fresh marigold, mustering in Orient colours all the day, till the declining of the sun do summon him to resign, and retire to a withered stalk. And omitting no sort of exclamations, he accused greatly the imbecility of men, that are so apt to be made subject to the thing that is derived of the imperfection of themselves, and ordained from the beginning to be their vassals, and at commandment to serve them in their necessary affairs.

But, by and by, he seemed to quarrel with his rash imputation in blaspheming so unworthily that noble sex. Wherewith, examining the deformity and wants in himself, resolved the same to be the cause of her just disdain and his evil fortune. "For," saith he, "I have known divers (favoured with the gifts of nature and assistance of courtlier education) that have reaped other rewards of their service than the rigour of my mistress will expose; neither is there any woman, how simple soever she be, that hath not a capacity to discern both good and ill, and judgment to consider the merit of him that makes her a present of his service."

At last he fell into terms of commendation of his mistress, with repetition of her gifts and virtue; wherein, accounting her the paragon of his time, he wished her derived of some noble house, to the end the greatness of her race might give increase to the renown of her virtue and chastity, which he thought but too constant for the purpose he went about, desiring to enjoy her but as his secret friend, and convert her into a fountain to satisfy the thirst of his pleasures, wished that such immovable constancy and perfection of mind might find always place of abode in such as men do choose for their wives and lawful companions of their bed. Wherewith, as he filled the air with the sighs of his complaints, and fed the eyes of his mind with a secret contemplation of his cruel mistress, the messenger of Aurora, pronouncing the approach of the day in discovering certain scarlet beams of the sun in the bottom of the east firmament, gave end to his discourse which was begun at the rising of the moon.

And whether it were that the long complaint of his grief had brought some moderation to his passion, or the

emptiness of his brain for want of sleep moved him to put confidence in dreams, or whether a new suggestion of the spirit which first possessed him presented a fresh hope or likelihood of that which he ought to have forgotten, or what it was, it is harder to judge than easy to eschew : but, entering into a little arbour or cabinet, curiously decked with divers bough and branches of odoriferous smell, he took his lute and recorded his sorrow in the tune of an old song, which he found written of long time by a poet, shod with the same iron and wounded with a semblable weapon ; the end of which dolorous record seemed to import such a sudden consolation, that, having thereby as it were a present passport of his former passion, gave judgment with them that are stricken with the serpents of Taranto, that music is a chief means to break the bed of fancy, and prevent despair ready to invade the doubtful mind.

Which gave him courage eftsoons to commence a second harmony, whose end stirred up a remembrance of his former sorrow, and restoring a fresh alarum of his amorous thoughts, made him immediately abandon his lute and books of music. And going to bed he accounted some ease to lie hid under his canopy, hoping that, being oppressed with sleep, the conceit of his dream, serving as a looking-glass for contemplation of his mistress, would bring him some contentment and dispense of his dolour. Which, as it is a kind of cold consolation and pleasure of no great delight, with less continuance, so it includes comparison of the lover's estate with the order of little children, who, when they weep, are pleased with trifles, delighting more in the lulling of the nurse than in the offer of a monarch.

But now to Janiquette, who, during the solitary time and desolate abode of Luchino in his house, was married, by the travail and assistance of her friends, to a mariner or master of a ship, whose trade was to convey the merchants of all parts from port to port, as their traffic and trade required. This marriage was no sooner performed in the church, but fame, filling the ears of Luchino, made him partaker of the news, with advice to renew the earnest of his former bargain with a double diligence, and treble desire, preferring as it were an assured hope of speedy victory ; the rather for that he accounted the marriage a convenient means to cover the fault of his foul desire. Wherein he received a success of his

former attempts; for she that detested his endeavour, being at liberty, thought the offence of double disposition in offending God and the world in breaking the league of her faith and vow of obedience to her husband. Whose simplicity, and state subject to need and lack, Luchino forgat not to feed with large proffers of his friendship, in such sort as, what with the hope of his assistance, and fear of the authority he bare then in the city, he had him as it were in a familiar awe, neither suspecting his access to his house, nor misliking his conference with his wife; of whom, notwithstanding, he could not obtain but the use of words. Which, as she durst not deny, for the respect of awe and honour which her husband bare to him, so having a notable wisdom joined with her rare gift of chastity, reposing herself in the grace of God to defend her honour, kept his meaning secret, and would not communicate the foulness of his intent to any, and much less to her waspish husband; leaving an example to all ladies, not sufficient in virtue, rather to resist all such alarums of themselves, or at least make a secret concealment, than, in bewraying their own weakness, to breed a bees' nest in the heads of their husbands with reports of small substance.

But now the amorous traffic of Luchino, and common haunt to the mariner's house, began to breed a doubt of his doing amongst his nearest friends; who, not knowing of the marriage of Janiquette, imagined what might happen, and (as careful guardians of their nephew) studied to prevent the worst. Wherefore, lest the allurement of her beauty, and disposition of his folly, might unhappily conclude a secret contract between them, they accosted him one day with earnest request, that, in ceasing at last to pursue the wanton instigations of his youth, he would cross sail, and retire to a trade of honest life.

"Wherein," say they (very loath to offend him), "albeit we have no great cause to infer imputation of any heinous enormity or disorder not convenient, yet, seeing the pleasant time of your young years slip away under a veil of vain and barren life—whose sequel (if in time you abridge not the race of your running course) argues no small inconvenience to yourself, with great discredit to your dead father—we have thought good to enter into device for preserving of that which yet remains, and to prevent the malice of future time. Wherefore, according to the credit and resolved trust reposed

in us by your late father (the very remembrance of whom restores us to a special care and zeal of your honour and well-doing), we wish you to convert this idle and desolate order of living into a disposition and desire of honest marriage; whereby you shall not only deceive the expectation of the bad sort, divining already of your destruction, but eschew the sentence of ordinary mischief appointed to fall upon such as, wallowing in sensual pleasures, regard not the honour and estimation of their house, and which appears even ready to thunder upon you, if you dispatch not yourself of the principal cause of this great and imminent misfortune. Wherein, for a declaration of the special care we have of you, we present you here with a frank offer of our travail, diligence, and counsel, to be ready at all times to assist you in the choice of her whom God shall enjoin you to make the lawful companion of your bed."

The young man, understanding sufficiently their intent, cut off their further discourse with his promise, not only to make speedy exchange of his former trade, but also commit himself wholly to their discretion and wisdom; with resolution to be ready to enter into marriage with such one as they judged of equality and everyway convenient for his condition and calling. Wherein there was such expedition of diligence used by his friends, that, within a space of two or three months, he was married no less richly than honourably, and to a beauty sufficient to content a reasonable man. Whereof, if any rejoiced with good cause, I think it was poor Janiquette; who, persuading herself to be rid by this means of an importunate client, blessed the goodness of her fortune in providing so well for the enemy of her honour, and delivering her with honesty from the danger of his charms: albeit her conceit was answered with a contrary success.

And as our nature, for the most part, nowadays, is grown to such corruption by a continual desire of filthy gain, that (as Aristotle saith) "nothing is able to satisfy the covetousness of man"; even so the infection of love (after he once have prevailed above the wholesome parts in us) is of such wonderful operation, that he doth not only choke the gift of our understanding, in such sort as we are found more apt to embrace the things that be hurtful than able to follow the lore of wisdom and virtue, but also takes away the respect and duty of our conscience; which you

may easily discern in the discourse of this Luchino, who, notwithstanding the vow he made to God, and honour that every man ought to give to marriage, could not content himself with the company of his own wife, but renewed his resort with alarums of fresh importunities to poor Janiquette. Which, being noted and spied divers times of his wife, made her doubt that which was not. And albeit she was resolved of a participation and equality of love, yet she feared not much that the mariner's wife deceived her of anything that she accounted due to herself; for that the common report of her chaste and honest life assured her of the contrary. Chiefly she repined that so vain a hope should withdraw him from her company, feeling withal a certain want in the accomplishment of the exercise and desire of the bed at home.

And truly as there is nothing more hurtful to the breach of amity between the goodman and wife than when the stronger part converts his affection, confirmed by vow, into a disposition and desire to abuse the virtue of true loyalty, so he that hunts the appetite of his will, and rangeth after change of diet, having sufficient at home, stands not only in hazard of grace afore God for violation of wedlock, but giving occasion to his wife to follow his track, reaps now and then for reward the just title and surname of a cuckold, bequeathing besides to the succession of his house a dowry of perpetual slander, which is scarcely subject to the expiration of time.

His wife laid afore him the whole circumstance of his fault, with the general bruit that passed daily through all the streets of Genoa, together with the wrong he did to the reputation of the poor Janiquette; "whose honesty," saith she, "albeit is without just cause of reprehension, yet have you brought it in question amongst the slanderous sort, whose judgments are always according to the malice of their disposition"; desiring him for end, in dismissing his former trade to withdraw his access, lest he purchased not the like preferment for himself that he sought to procure for another.

To whom, albeit he could not deny the friendship he bare to Janiquette, yet he excused the same not to import any prejudice to the behalf of his wife, with further protestation that Janiquette was one of the paragons of honesty that our age did nourish, and the respect of her virtue was the only

cause of his admiration, procuring chiefly his recourse and desire of her company. "For the rest," saith he, "the babble of the people is rather of custom than of credit, and the clearness of my conscience takes away the spot of reproach, if any be; neither can the mouth of the slanderer prevail, where the integrity of the mind offers to encounter his malice"; desiring her to dismiss the remembrance of her grudge with a forgiveness of the fault; promising her from the instant to correct the humour of his former folly, and become such one on her behalf as her honest modesty and other virtues deserved. Wherewith he closed so surely the mouth of his wife that long after he lived free from the tumult of such quarrels, and she (not void of suspicion) disposed herself to contentment by force, with expectation to see an end of the dance. The expedition whereof exceeded her imagination.

For within a short time after, the mariner, making sail into Sardinia, was encountered by certain pirates and sent prisoner to Callaria, a town subject to the Turkish government; with no small desolation to his wife, who, as one deprived of her chiefest stay and comfort, and overcharged with a number of little children, whose sustentation depended wholly upon the travail of their father, is now void of means to succour them. And that which pinched more grievously was the general dearth that overwhelmed all the land, in such sort, that a sack of corn was seldom sold under nine or ten ducats.

Which arguing great distress to the state of poor Janiquette, chiefly for that she was denied ability to redeem her husband, and also in despair of means to relieve her children, crying continually for meat, began to prefer in her a faintness of courage; and the heart whom the whole assaults of love and long importunities of Luchino, his great presents and proffers, with promises of large price, could not once stir or remove from the seat of constancy, feels now such an alteration of fortune, that she is at point to surrender of herself that which neither power nor policy could put to utterance.

And albeit the extremity of her case ministered persuasions to make an offer of herself to him that of long had served her in heart with suit for her good-will, yet the grudge of so great an offence, preferring arguments to the contrary, willed her rather to exchange her present life and former renown with death, than live with the spot of so foul an act. Wherein,

weighing thus in the balance of doubtful imaginations, pinched extremely with two of the greatest plagues of the world, the lamentable noise of her children crying for food with open mouth, as the young bird in the roof, complaining in his kind upon hunger till he receive refreshing at the beak of his dam, rung afresh in her ears ; which preferred such compassion to the tender heart of the desolate mother, that only their age and infirmity forced her to a determination of that which erst she detested to remember. A marvellous force, sure, of necessity, who, as she is the mistress of arts, so her malice imports such a distress, that it makes us many times abuse the goodness of our nature in committing things which neither honour nor conscience can justify.

For what greater mischief could she have thundered upon this poor woman, than, in depriving her of natural and womanly shame, to compel her to make sale of her honour, for the sustain of herself and support of her miserable children ; whose doleful tunes, exclaiming against their wretched mother that had not to satisfy the rage of their hunger, restored her eftsoons to such pity, that she addressed herself immediately to the lodging of Luchino ; who, walking alone in his base-court, was no less astonied to see her there, than she ashamed to be at the point to yield him a villainous homage, if God had not been the protector of her chastity. And being afore him, with face and garments besprent and dyed with the drops of her watery eyes, she fell flat at his feet, yielding her honour to his order under these terms :

" Albeit, sir," saith she, " the prince or captain that hath often summoned his enemy to surrender his hold, and he (denying such offers) doth maintain the quarrel even until the extreme sentence of war, which is fire or famine, is forced at last to strike sail and hang out a flag of submission, may (by all law of arms) put him to the sword, and his city to utter sackage, yet the glory of that conquest will appear greater and honour the captain with treble fame, if, in preferring compassion afore the rigour of justice, he admit the captives to favour, sparing to spill the blood of such as willingly yield their heads to the block under the stroke and edge of his sword. Neither is any man, of what degree soever he be, of such commendation either for his courage, bounty, or other qualities and ornaments of nature, as, worthily honoured with veneration for the gift of compassion

and pity; which, as it is a virtue exceeding all the rest, so (by the advice of the Scripture) she is chiefly to be declared on the behalf of such wretches as, fallen into danger and distress by offending the prince or his people in office, have nothing to prevent the malice of the law and just meed of their desert, but the expectation and hope in the fruits of so precious a virtue.

"I say thus much, sir, to stir up your humour of compassion, and, dismissing the remembrance of all offences past, to extend present pity to your poor Janiquette, who, if ever she offended you, is here come to yield her to your mercy; and, taking such vengeance as you think good, to employ her further in the service that best may like you. Only I commend unto your goodness the wretched state of my children, whose miseries, accompanied with a continual cry for relief, have here presented me prostrate at your feet, kissing the same with no less humility than sign of submission, with request eftsoons to accept the offer of your handmaid in recompense of the wrong I have heretofore done you; but chiefly, alas! to redeem my children from the rage and violence of hunger, and prolong their lives that ought not yet to take end by the law and course of nature."

Here love and pity seemed to quarrel within the heart of Luchino; the one, putting the prey into his hands, provoked him to crop the fruits of his long desire; the other, defending the cause of the wretched captive, preferred persuasions to the contrary, putting him in remembrance that the glory cannot be great, where the victory is won by unlawful means, neither could he triumph in a better conquest than, in overcoming himself, to dismiss her without violation. Wherefore, comparing her former constancy with the extreme causes that procured her present offer, respecting also the duty of his own conscience, he did not only determine to assist her poverty with succour of sustentation, but also to abstain his hands from deflowering so rare a paragon. Wherefore he took her from the ground, and kissing her watery cheek, said unto her:

"Do away these tears of dole, and convert the remembrance of ancient sorrow into an unfeigned hope of present consolation. Repose yourself upon the virtue of your invincible chastity, and imagine you have received the due merit of the same; for, for my part, God forbid that the

malice of your present necessity (yielding you into my hands) should make me greedy to get that which love could not conquer nor spoil you of, the thing which I ought, and will, hold in chief veneration. Wherein, being thus, by your virtue, made master of myself, I feel also mortified in me the wanton suggestions which erst moved me to love only the beauty and body of Janiquette; and now that reason is become my guide, and distress rather than love hath made you thus prodigal of your honour, for the sustentation of your children, it shall suffice me to have you at my commandment without any offer of wrong to your estimation or honesty. And as your chastity doth challenge her reward, so—because it is you that is to glory in the gift of so great a virtue, and I to yield tribute for that treason I have wrought you—I assure you here, in the mouth of a gentleman, not only to furnish you of all things nesessary, with honour and estimation equal to mine own sister, but also to be as careful of your reputation, as heretofore I have sought to seduce and spot it with lascivious infamy."

Janiquette was restored here to double contentment, both to have her pudicity respected, and undoubted assurance of the liberal promise of the courteous Luchino. Which she would eftsoons have acknowledged with an humble prostration and kissing of his feet, but that he (not liking such superstitious reverence) prevented her intent, and presented her by the hand unto his wife with these words:

"Because the conceit of the jealous mind is seldom satisfied till the cause of the suspicion be clean taken away, and that the grudge is never appeased till the offender be punished, I have here brought you the cause of your greatest doubt, with the vision that so many nights hath appeared in your dream and broken the sweet course of your natural sleep, enjoining you with full authority to commit her to what penance you will, giving the stroke of vengeance at your own discretion."

To whom she answered, that if she had no more cause to be doubtful of his doings than reason to be jealous of the honesty of the poor woman, she had been as free from suspicion as far from cause of disquiet; neither had her eyes any cause to complain of the impediment of sleep, nor her brain so often assailed with the alarum of hollow dreams: "for the experience and proof of her virtue," saith she, "did always

assure me of her honesty, which yet will not stoop to the malice of the time nor lose the glory of her renown, although fortune have laid her heavy hand upon her in taking away her husband."

Which temperate modesty in his wife doubled his affection, with confirmation of a sincere good-will towards her for ever. And in reciting the last chance and discourse passed between him and Janiquette, he said that if she knew in what sort he had kept his faith toward her, she would not doubt to put him on the file of most true and loyal husbands; willing her to take her and furnish her with all provision, and other things necessary, with no less care and liberal allowance than if it were for his dear sister. Whereunto she put no less expedition than herself had cause to rejoice in the honest continency of her husband. All which, being made immediately a common bruit through the city, became also of great wonder amongst the people: as well for that the instigation of hard necessity had made Janiquette pliable to that which she hath long refused with great detestation, as also for the heroical virtue of the gentleman; who, abhorring the wicked offer of fortune and time, converted his lascivious desire, nourished in his entrails by so long continuance, into a disposition of virtue contrary to the expectation of all men.

An example, sure, worthy of great veneration, and wherein the sensual appetites are so restrained and governed by the rule of reason, that I doubt whether the Romans have noted more continency in their Fabia, Aemilia, or Scipio, or the Grecians in their old Xenocrates—who is not so meritorious of commendation (for that, being charged with years, he made a profit of his chastity) as this Luchino, who, in the glory of his age, and full of the hot humours of youth, made a conquest of his affections, with a wonderful show of virtue, and undoubted sign and assurance of the perfection of his faith. For which cause I have noted unto you his history; which also I wish might serve to stir up the frail youth of our days to the imitation of the like virtue; remembering, by the view of this discourse, that the sensual appetites and provocation of the flesh are not of such force but they are subject to correction; neither is love so invincible but the wise and virtuous man may keep him always in awe, so that he give him not so much liberty at the first, nor credit too much the instigation and humour of his own fancy.

ELEVENTH TALE

THE SILENT LOVER

THE ARGUMENT

WHOSE youth and years of folly have made an experience of the disposition of love, and such as he infecteth with his frantic poison; trying in like sort the difference between the vanities of the world and the contemplation of celestial things, or other virtues of divine operation upon earth, opening as it were to all degrees of mortality an entry or way to come to the glory and honour of the everlasting Paradise above—to such, I say, may I boldly appeal for confirmation of the ancient opinion grounded in the stomachs of men from the beginning, that the beauty and flattering behaviour of a woman is the true and natural adamant; seeing that that stone (by a certain virtue attractive, and special gift of nature) hath not such power to force and draw the heavy iron into it, as the secret mystery, hidden in the eyes and face of a woman, are of authority to summon and steal the affections and hearts of men; which hath wrought a resolution or thing of most certainty amongst a number of men nowadays, that such charms and serpentine allurements were sent amongst us from above, as well to torment our pleasure, as also in some sort to give ease to the affliction of such as are unhappily contributors to that poisoned participation.

Wherein, as we have long marvelled why Paris forsook the delights of Troy to become the thrall of Helen in Greece, what moved one Hercules to abandon his heavy mace and club of conquest to depend wholly upon the commandment of his woman friend, or how Solomon abused the gift of his wisdom to commit folly with her who only governed him that guided the whole monarchy; so, behold! I have here to increase your wonder with a true portrait or picture of a more force in a woman, and folly in a man, who, without any use of former, or hope of future, favour, saving to fulfil the appetite of his foolish mistress, abandoned the use and benefit of his speech for three years, putting on by that means the shape of brutality; between whom and the creatures of

understanding, the philosophers conclude an only difference of the use of reason and speech. A case, sure, no less notorious for the rariety that way than declaring a singular force of nature in the subject upon whom she seems to bestow such pre-eminence above all other mysteries upon earth. Whereof may serve for sufficient proof the effeminate alteration in Hercules, the decrease of strength in Samson, the loss of wisdom and understanding in Solomon, and the simplicity of this gentleman whose discourse followeth.

Amongst the limitrophal towns confining the borders of Piedmont, no man doubts, I think, that the city of Turin, being the only lantern to give light to all the provinces thereabout for civil orders and integrity of conversation, is not, also, a chief rampire and sure bulwark to her own country against the incursion of enemies. Neither is it of less estimation for the natural situation of the place, than beautified greatly by the industrious endeavour of man, adding as it seems a more decoration, of late, to that town than either nature or the slender device of men in times passed could imagine.

Somewhat without the suburbs of this rich and populous city is planted, in a pleasant valley, a little village called Moncalieri, worthy everyway to be joined in neighbourhood to so great a city, being environed on the one side with the fragrant air of the fertile fields, all bedewed with the sundry sweet smells of the incense of Aurora, and on the other side with the lofty hills, breathing from the mouth of the Zephyr the air of health, to refresh in time of need the drowsy tenants of the valley; which (amongst other happy influences of the heavens) seemed also to have a special favour of the gods to bring forth and nourish the most fair, virtuous, courteous ladies that could be found in any one corner of Europe.

Amongst whom, notwithstanding, there was not long since a young widow called Zilia; who, declining from the disposition of the climate and planet of her nativity, became so haggard-like and inclined to cruelty, that she seemed rather to take her beginning among the deserts and craggy places of Savoy, than to suck the breasts of the delicate nurses in the pleasant champaign, refreshed by the beautiful hand of Eridanus—sometime called the father of rivers, and now termed by the title of Po—whose crystal channels and

silver streams (dividing themselves into divers distilling brooks) do not only drive men into admiration, but also draw them to become neighbours to a liquor of such delight. This disdainful widow and enemy to all courtesy, although she had as yet scarcely entered into the twenty-and-fourth year of her age, yet she persuaded herself hereafter to abandon utterly the society of man, whether it were by marriage or otherways, avowing to spend the remainder of her years in singleness of life; a resolution, truly, both godly and commendable, if the ticklish motions of the frail flesh would be content to obey the wholesome exhortations of the spirit.

But whereas our declining bodies, pampered in all delicacy, together with the unruly appetites raging after wilful desire, do seem to quarrel with our chastity, and vanquish all resistance, the counsel of the apostle is to be followed; who wills that we marry in Christ, to avoid the danger of the soul, and common slander of the world. She, also, after she had already performed the due debt of her duty to the dead body of her husband, whom she accompanied to the grave with abundance of tears and other funeral dole, sought not (according to the trade of young widows, nowadays, left without controlment) to abuse the benefit of her liberty, or dispose the time of her widowhood in other exercise than in augmentation of the patrimony left to her little son, and enrich herself by the travail of her own hands. Wherein she became so covetous and greedy of gain, that, cutting off her idle train of loiterers (haunting commonly the houses of great men), she only reserved such for the necessary members of her household, as, with the sweat of her brows, refused not the toil of any honest travail.

Neither made she conscience to trade up the delicate troupe of gentlewomen attending upon her in the affairs of house-keeping and other honest exercises of the hand; to whom she was always a companion herself, thinking nothing so well done as that which passed in the presence of her eye, or with the assistance of her own hand: wherein, certainly, her virtue was no less meritorious than her endeavour commendable. For the office of a mother or mistress of families consists not only in keeping her servants to continual travail, or taking account of their doings and day's labour; but, stretching further, she is enjoined (according to the advice of Solomon) to a straiter charge, to assist the endeavours

of her people with the help and diligence of her own body ; seeing her advice is no less necessary for the perfection of the work, than her presence and help therein a special incitation, encouraging the servants not to desist from toil till their task be performed, and that to the expectation of her desire.

Neither ought any degree be dispensed withal from honest exercise, seeing the imitation of travail is derived from our Saviour Christ, Who, exposing His body to all toil, grudged not to undertake those painful endeavours which the apostles refused to endure ; leaving an example to all estates to imitate honest toil (which, by the mouth of the apostle, He doubteth not to term a singular virtue), promising a reward of perpetuity with a continual rest in the bosom of Abraham, to those that unfeignedly do follow it. But touching those delicate and wanton housewives, which think their estimation impaired, if they but put their noses within the air of painful endeavour ; they, I say, being hurtful to a whole commonwealth, ought either to be utterly weeded out of the company of the good sort, or else traded up in the schools of continual travail, until the fruits of the same do adorn their states which they account diminished by the exercise of that most honest virtue.

Wherein, if the ancient historians and fathers of knowledge, being careful to provoke the youth of their time to the following of virtue, did paint the office and duty of a good housewife in the person of one Lucretia—whom they have neither made a babbler or one that spends her time in chatting of vain things, running to feasts and banquets, gazing out of the windows upon every street-walker, or masking in the nights with covered face, without regard of honesty or honour of the house whereof she came ; but have drawn her sitting in her chamber amongst her young damsels using the spindle and exercise of the needle—even so, we need not, methinks, doubt also to admit as a familiar mirror for you coy gentlewomen of this age, our young widow Zilia ; who, dividing the day into hours, and hours into minutes, would not suffer the least moment of time to escape without some exercise of commendation or profit. Wherein she was so earnestly given, that her holidays, or seasons of solemnity, could not discharge her body from labour, or make her be seen in time of recreation, either in the streets, gardens, or other convenient places of resort, convenient for honest assembly to

recreate their weary bodies and refresh their spirits dulled with travail.

Which virtue, if it be honoured, for the rarity in our dames nowadays, yet had she another gift of no less commendation, which she seemed not to attain unto without the help of the Egyptians' theology ; who, resolving upon certain honest parts which ought to adorn the beauty of a virtuous and chaste woman, have drawn the image of a woman holding a key afore her mouth, and her feet upon a wheel ; noting, thereby, that an honest woman hath always her lips locked and her tongue tied, to the end she utter no words of vain disposition, nor speak not but in time and place convenient, and her feet chained to a wheel, because they should not use their liberty to wander as vagabonds, no ! nor stir out of the house, unless it were for religion's sake, to visit the churches or places of prayer, or now and then to render duty to them of whom we took our being and came into this world.

Wherein this widow, exacting upon the strait points of those commendable customs, was not so religious as superstitious, or rather wholly given to rigour ; for she used her devotion of prayer at such secret times, that it was scarce possible to see her when she went to hear the divine service of God ; and whether it were that she thought herself so fair that all men were unworthy to touch the precious brink of her coral mouth with a chaste kiss, or whether the renown of her rare chastity made her strange in condescending to that which was tolerable and decent enough to be admitted, yet was she such a niggard of her courtesy, that she would make no conscience to deny to kiss any gentleman of what condition soever he were ; an ancient civility used of long time amongst all estates, and continued to this day as a behaviour of toleration amongst the dames of great calling, accounting it a chief kind of humanity to receive and welcome strangers, coming to visit them for good-will, with a chaste kiss, accompanied with a countenance of seemly familiarity.

But now, as this widow had laid her husband in his long bed of rest, there to remain until the general resurrection of all flesh, the dolorous disposition of her funeral dole retired into oblivion, and she wholly given to tread the path of painful toil (as well for the sustentation of herself and her charge, as increase of the patrimony left to her little son), it chanced that a gentleman of the most estimation of that

country, called Monsieur Philiberto Virley, whose house was next neighbour to Moncalieri, came upon a holy-day or great feast to Moncalieri.

And being in the church there, in place of occupying his mind with heavenly cogitations, or recording with attentive ear the infallible Word of God, published that day in the pulpit by a preacher of the learned sort, he bestowed his devotion in beholding the glimmering saints in the body of the church : amongst whom his unfortunate eyes took too large a view of the exquisite beauty of Zilia. Who, having already removed the veil of dolour, and because it was very hot, and that she would give herself large liberty to hear the ghostly father, took away her *escarfion* and other implements incident to preserve the beauty of the face of the effeminate sort, and unbared her crystal neck, nothing differing from the complexion of her face, being both dipped in the Orient dye of the pure alabaster, tempered with certain lively streams of red, like unto the incarnate rose springing upon the brim of the pleasant arbour in the dewish mornings of May.

Which pleasant glance and unhappy encounter so dazzled the eyes of the knight at the first sight, that, being not able to withdraw his regards from the view of so fair a saint, he was driven at last (in making the inner parts of his mind a table whereupon he drew the curious picture of her beauty) to admit the infection of that pleasant allurement into the bottom of his heart : wherein, being once harboured, it began (according to the nature of a deadly poison) to work by little and little, until the distilling juice, dropping from the pernicious humour of that perilous fountain, had drowned and got dominion over the best parts within this unfortunate patient. Who even now felt such strange alteration in himself, such new affections quarrelling with his former quiet, and all his body possessed of so unruly a guest, that, being at the end of his wits to imagine the cause, was no less able to withstand the ill than moderate the fury of his new fever, but miserably had left his life in gage, if Fortune herself had not become the physician to his disease : whereof you shall have large relation in the due place of this history.

But during the time of the sermon, and all the matutinal prayer, our unhappy Philiberto wavered in contrariety of thoughts, reserving, notwithstanding, his eyes assuredly and firmly fixed upon her who makes no more account of them

that regard her with such great admiration, than they themselves of their lives and liberty, committing rashly two such precious jewels between the merciless hands of so cruel a woman ; of whose estate, condition, trade, and order of living, this new-enamoured Virley (being come from the church to his lodging) forgat not to make diligent inquisition ; which (as oil to light his match) returned unto him a general report of her honesty. Wherein being confirmed by the mouth of every man, he made no conscience immediately to proclaim her the sovereign lady of his life and the only disposer of his secret thoughts.

And yet, amongst the sundry commendations given to her virtues, he was made to understand, by secret information of some dear and familiar friends, of the incivility with certain unseemly points of unnatural discourtesy reigning in her. Which albeit suspended his resolution for a time, occupying his doubtful mind with variety of cogitations, yet, seeing his destiny had already enjoined him to be a thrall to her beauty —for the which he had already put his liberty as a pawn between the hands of him who, having once gotten the hearts of men within the jurisdiction of his durance, will not release their imprisonment nor restore their liberty so soon, nor when they wish it—he determined to pursue the end of his enterprise, committing himself to be guided by the favour of Fortune, and the success of his endeavour, to the good-will of love. Who, leading him through the blind vale of vain hope, and tickling him by certain arguments or likelihoods of good-speed, to make him merry for the time with the conceit of his own phantasy, willed him to put his intent upon terms ; whereby, and with the continuance of his long service, he seemed to assure him at last to wrest the good-will of the widow to the appetite and expectation of his desire.

Wherein, for his first entry into the labryinth of miserable toil, he committed the order of his own house at Virley, and affairs of importance to the direction of others, and determined his abode at Moncalieri, to the end that, if in planting his battery, nor with the assistance of the uttermost of his force, he could make no reasonable breach into the fort which he meant to assail (in the winning whereof himself was most in danger to be first taken), yet, at the least, he might recreate and solace himself with the contemplation of an image of so rare and excellent beauty ; the remembrance

whereof, seeming rather to double his grief than give moderation to his passion, served more to stir up the malice of that poisoned humour of love than to repulse the fury of his new fever; and lastly, preferring absolute arguments of his peremptory destruction, offered divers likelihoods of future disquiet for the latter remainder and residue of his years yet to come.

And, being now become a citizen of Moncalieri, he began to haunt the church above his ordinary, not so much, peradventure, for any fervent zeal he had to prayer or invocation to God, as for the amorous devotion he owed to his new saint. Whose presence albeit he could not enjoy but in the body of the church, and that in times of preaching and public service of the Lord, yet did he refrain to make the house of God a place to communicate his practice of love, persuading himself the offence to be too heinous to defile the sacred temples and holy places dedicated to the Highest with any spot of villainy, and specially with attempts of such folly: being chiefly forbidden by the mouth of our Saviour, "Domus mea, domus orationis vocabitur.—My house shall be called the house of prayer, and not a den for adulterers or thieves, nor place to practise any iniquity or sin."

Wherein, albeit the zeal of religion forbad him to use conference with her in the church, yet the piercing sting of affection opening him another means, put him in remembrance to attend duly her coming out; where, with great humility, he offered his service oftentimes in being her guide to her lodging. Which as he forgat not to perform with all the courtesy and seemly behaviour he could imagine, so, notwithstanding all the vehement persuasions he could infer for the accomplishment of his desire, yet reaped he thereby no more contentment nor means to qualify his grief, than she took pleasure in hearing his discourse and loyal offer of his unfeigned good-will. For she, as a cruel enemy to courtesy, feigning not to understand what he said, replied to all his allegations of love with some conference of housewifery or housekeeping. Wherewith, turning the cart against the horse, he became no less amazed at her overthwart reasons than she seemed to take pleasure in the tears of his complaints. Which argued not only cold comfort in the suit of the wooer, but also imminent occasion of his own destruction, if, by the assistance of some other means, he avoided not

with expedition the sundry ills that threatened to thunder upon him.

Wherefore, devising certain banquets and gossip-meetings at his lodging of divers of the burgess-wives of that town, he entered thereby into the good opinion of certain dames that were no less familiar with the rigorous Zilia. Amongst whom he chose out one whose bosom he thought to make the register of his secret, with intent to impart with her both the cause of his dolour, and the means to mitigate the same in bewraying his grief to her that was the fountain and occasion of his present passion. To her then, being his next neighbour, no less subtle of her own inclination than well experienced in such affairs (neither ignorant what dish they feed upon that sit at the table of love, nor what bitter taste those broths commonly have which Cupid breweth for his guests), he addresseth himself, conjuring her, in the first place of his preamble, to make counsel of the cause of his complaint.

Wherewith entering into the discourse of his love, he conceals notwithstanding the name of his lady, until he heard the answer of his neighbour, who, perceiving already the mark which he shot at, offered him frankly her help to the uttermost of her power. Whereof she gave him assurance by promises of large scope, that, in consideration of the honesty which she had noted in him hitherunto, she would not fail to bestow her endeavour everyway to the advancement of his desire. "Wherein, sir," saith she, "although my offer seem more liberal on your behalf than your meaning plain unto me, yet I hope you will conster my words to an honest end, and not abuse the readiness of my inclination to do you good in any travail of reasonable consequence, wherein it shall please you to employ me."

To whom this careful knight, after he had given her the choice of a thousand thanks, and persuaded her eftsoons to a secretness touching his practice (fearing yet to disclose the name of his mistress), raved at her in this dark manner :

"My case, alas ! " saith he, "differeth not much from the condition of the politic captain, who, going about to give the assault to a fortress or place of defence, being careful to keep his soldiers from slaughter or the butcher's bowl, planteth his ordinance and battery in the face of the fort, to the end that the place, being made assaultable by the help

of the cannon, the soldiers may more safely give charge upon the walls, and perform the expectation of their captain; even so for my part having drawn a great deal of time to end in the long siege of a fort, no less strong than the stony rock, whose hardness, resisting the force of all shot, makes, also, like account of the valiant courage of my soldiers (whereof I have already lost the greatest number in divers skirmishes given me by my pleasant enemy), am driven in the end to flee unto you for help for the performance of this war; to the end that, with the assistance of your counsel and travail, I may be able to make an approach, and enter the place which hitherunto hath repulsed all my assaults."

But she, not able to conster the mystery of his comparison, desired him to commit the meaning of his riddle to terms of plainer understanding, "For," saith she (somewhat smiling), "I was never nourished amongst the oracles of dream-readers of ancient time, nor tasted of the cunning of Oedipus, neither have I much been traded in the exercise of war, or acquainted with the use of arms, a thing improper and far unseemly for our sex."

To whom he replied, in few words, that the labyrinth of that war which he meant was no less natural than common. "Neither doubt I," saith he, "but sometime in your life you have proved what trains may be used to entrap the enemy, with what canvasados the trench may be suddenly invaded, what secret ambushes may be laid to vanquish force by policy, and what means are to be used everyway, as well by the assailant as defendant."

Whereunto she answered with a semblable similitude derived of the like occasion, chiefly to encourage the faint soldier to continue his new war; saying that, as far as she could discern, there lacked nothing but the assurance of the field. "Seeing," saith she, with a familiar show of pleasant cheer, "we are already in point to enter the combat, and albeit all your policy in devising bulwarks, square and round mounds of great height and well rampired, are not able to batter the place; and the subtle mines under the earth and other martial engines lack force against the strength of the enemy, nor in no sort do favour your enterprise; nor your trenches artificially made, pricked full of perilous flankers, are able to amaze the captain of the fort; no! nor the sundry terrible assaults given by your desperate soldiers will procure

either parley or composition ; yet," saith the merry dame, " let us not reward our long war with a short shame, nor sell the glory of so great a victory for so vile a price as faintness of courage, but let us eftsoons renew the conflict with fresh supplies, and send to summon the fort by the mouth of the cannon, whose message, I warrant you, the captain will not deny.

" Albeit, because in plainly understanding your intent I may frankly employ my endeavour, I pray you dismiss these dark apothegms of war and open your meaning simply: for I grieve on your behalf, to see you converted into such alteration, which makes you seem utterly to degenerate from your ancient modesty and wisdom." Whereof he desired her not to marvel, seeing that, according to the deposition of the accident, the condition and state of men do commonly change and alter.

" For I am become," saith he, " subject and bound to one that hath made me in none other taking than those unhappy wretches that he tormented with devils ; who, as they can neither say nor do anything but by the permission of the sprite that possesseth them, even so this cursed enchanter love hath got such power over all parts in me, that he alone commands me by power and authority, and I obey by awe and fear. He enjoins me penance at his pleasure, and I endure the pain and dare not complain. He, alas ! promised me contentment, and now payeth me with double annoy. He offered to assist me, and leaves me in the extremity of my distress. Yea ! in place where I ought to use arguments of most audacity, it is there that he deprives me of all courage and leaves me without countenance. And being alone, God knoweth how valiantly I invade the place which I dare scarcely behold with open eye when mine enemy is in presence. Is it not pity, alas ! to see one man distressed with so many diversities, at one instant, proceeding only of the raging appetite of one simple affection ?

" Neither would I grudge at the heavy burden of these passions, nor stick to endure a thousand more evils, if either sufferance would make my service acceptable, or time purchase the merit of my martyrdom. But whereas there appears nothing but uncertainty, with arguments everyway of evil success, and I in the meantime (according to the chameleon living with the breath of the air) do feed upon the offer of

vain imaginations, what is there to keep me out of the danger of despair; saving that the unfortunate sort are content to impart toward the moderation of my grief some of their solace; which is to feed for the time upon the pleasant conceit of phantasy and flickering offers of vain hope, attending that some good God will lay in my lap the assistance of a loyal friend, that will either shut the gates of this hell against me, or at least procure the speedy dispence of my torment, by closing my eyes from the light of this world? Which I wish with no less fervent affection, than the sick man desireth with importunity to be dispatched of his pain."

Which he accompanied with such a dolorous peal of sighs, that his stomach and heart, being ready to take their leave of the breath of life, seemed to pant like a pair of bellows blowing the furnace of some fiery forge. Neither forgat his eyes to set open the windows of their conduits, and gush out a whole river of tears; which, being drained from the bottom of his belly, ascended to the uppermost parts to find out their natural issue, to the end that, with the retire of these draining humours, his life might also vanish, as in a slumber or quiet qualm. Which moved such a pity in his neighbour on the behalf of his dolour, that she was forced to keep him company with semblable kindness, offering eftsoons her help under these terms:

"Albeit," saith she, "the regard of mine honesty, with the estimation of the place which I hold without blushing amongst the troupes of honour and dames of great calling in this city, do forbid me the enterprise of anything that mine honour cannot brook, yet the sorrowful summons of your last complaint, tempered with so many tunes of doleful note hath filled me so full of compassion on your behalf, that I will not doubt to lay my conscience to gage for the redress of your present affliction. Wherein, if you will give me the charge of my commission, telling me what it is that I shall do for you, you shall see my endeavour shall be no less frankly employed for you than I know, by the view of mine own eyes, that your passion is simple and without all dissimulation. Only there rests that I know what she is to whom you have avowed so large a devotion. For I promise you to salute her so amply with the report of your loyalty and service, which I know you owe to her that is mistress of your heart, that unless her mouth be utterly out of taste, and the appetite of

courtesy clean taken from her, she shall not refuse the offer of your good-will, which I think is without a second in any place of the world.

"And truly, albeit diverse women, nowadays, have good cause to inveigh by complaints against the disloyalty of men, yet this lady, whom you seem to honour so much, hath neither cause to mislike her choice, nor reason to refuse the consent and offer of your service. Whereof as the earth seems a very niggard to bring forth and nourish so few of your disposition; so it cannot be chosen but pure loyalty, for lack of harbour within the hearts of most men, must retire and seek her a new habitation within the delicate entrails of us women; who embracing no less that virtue with dear affection, than desirous to expose unfeigned fruits of the same, are accounted to be clad in the habit of cruelty, if we seem to stand upon our guard, and expulse the assault of that frivolous and fleshly crew of vain lovers; who, proffering their service under a mask of feigning tears and sighs of double deceit, with other courtlike importunities, do bend the policy of all their practices to none other end than to abuse the favour which they find at their hands, that unhappily commit their honour to the keeping of those sycophants and common enemies to the renown of all ladies."

"Ah, good madam," saith he, "although my little ableness denies me sufficient means to measure the reward of your frank offer according to the merit of your great courtesy, yet, behold here a soldier and gentleman, bound to be no less prodigal of his life and spend the dearest drop of his blood in your service, than you seem liberal of your estimation for the appeasing of his grief! And seeing your promise is so far past by words of confirmation to do your best for me, as the same imports an assured hope of speedy help to come by our means, the chiefest thing that I commit to your friendship is to deliver a letter from me to Madam Zilia; whose beauty hath already made such a breach into my heart, and brewed the broth of the torment which you see I suffer, that unless I be speedily relieved, I do not see but that the three fates, weary with drawing forth the spindle of my life, will immediately cut asunder the twist, which hangs only by the hope of your succour, in purchasing me favour with her that hath made me captive in the prison of her commandment."

Wherewith the faithful burgess, being very sorry that so honest a gentleman had sown the seeds of his good-will in the soil of so bad increase, bringing forth but fruits of cruelty, assayed to take the worm out of his nose, in using persuasions to remove his phantasy. But he that was already resolved in his mishap, detested all counsel, and shut his ears from the wholesome advice of the wise matron; who, doubting that he would conster her words contrary to her meaning, in thinking that she inferred exhortations to purchase a release of her promise, willed him to write his letter, and she would not only deliver it, but also bring him a report of that which should be sent him for answer. "Whereby," saith she, "you shall see the little gain and less ease that will follow the merit of your painful travail, employed in the service of so unthankful a woman; with whom, seeing I am thoroughly acquainted, and her disposition no stranger to me, I mean not to practise in any other sort than to discharge the part of a messenger in delivering your letter: which if you have not already made, I shall attend your leisure, to the end to perform my promise."

Wherewith he thanked her as appertained, and being alone in his chamber summoned all his wits together to devise his letter, which seemed to be written in these or like terms:

"If my disease, good madam, were derived either of the shaking or burning fever, catarrhs, apoplexies, or any other hurtful influence incident commonly to annoy the parts of man's body, I would resort to the counsel of physic, and use the discipline of wholesome diet; but where my present passion proceeds only of the fervent affection I bear you, the extremity of the same denies also to be cured by any other remedy than the happy encounter of that which is the original cause of my grief. Wherein, albeit I half assure myself rather to receive speedy ease and end of my torment by the fatal doom of death, than abridgment of my dolours, or consolation in my distress by any endeavour or affection reciprocal of you, yet am I so linked in the labyrinth of love, that I am denied everyway to take truce with my unruly desire, and less able of myself to revoke the vow of my unfeigned devotion to your rare and heavenly beauty; in whom consists the proper cataplasm of my disease.

"Alas! under what crabbed constellation was I conceived, or what cruel destiny directs the course of my years;

seeing that, in the glory of my youth and prime time of mine age, I am at one instant threatened of the heavens, made subject to the malice of love, and ready to incur the perilous danger of despair, for want of hope to draw forth the length of my days to the uttermost date of my life? Which I think was formed first by nature, and continued hitherunto by consent of the gods, to spend the future remainder of my time only in the service of you, good madam; to whom herewith, as the first-fruits of my humble and dear zeal towards you, I make a present of my poor afflicted heart; which, as it is sustained by the only view and remembrance of your beauty and virtue, so, being denied harbour at your hands, his next and last refuge is to expect consolation in death; which hitherunto I have refused and for the present do shun, not for any horror or fear I conceive of his malice, but only to prolong yet the course of my life, to the end that, as my mind hath already vowed to serve you, so my body, as a necessary instrument, may be wholly employed to the execution of your commandments.

"But if the dedication of mine offer shall receive an unthankful repulse, or the merit of my affectioned service sent back with a payment of cruelty—a vice not like to inhabit where nature and the gods have disposed so plentifully all their gifts of grace, nor incident commonly to creatures of so virtuous nurture and good bringing up—you shall see me immediately suffer that which I have not deserved, and you I know will be sorry for the thing which you cannot amend. Wherefore, seeing you have the choice, both to prolong my life with double joy and abridge my days by undeserved dolour, embrace the works of compassion, the chief branches of virtue, and refuse the surname of cruelty. Wherein I prefer eftsoons this last importunity, to the end that, if my request be barred to enter the gates of pity with you, you may at least give death his despatch; who attends upon the report of your answer, to execute his charge upon him who wisheth you that which you hate, and sends you that which he loves.—Yours, more than his own,

P. Virley."

This letter, sealed and subscribed with his own hand, he delivered, not without abundance of tears, to his neighbour; who, promising him once again to bring him answer afore

she slept, went her way, leaving the languishing knight building castles in the air, with a thousand hammers in his head, and, tickling himself to make himself laugh, seemed sometime to bathe his sorrows in the joy and contentment which vain hope offered him by visions in his flattering conceit. But when the loathsome image of the cruel incivility of Zilia presented herself in his mind, his pleasure retired into dole, with as many arguments of present death as erst he imagined likelihoods of contentment and joy, seeming to have in his eye the angry and frowning looks wherewith his mistress received the coming of the messenger.

Who, arrived now at the palace of Zilia, met her coming out of a garden on the back side of her house, where, having saluted each other with equal show of courtesy, the lady messenger, thinking to prefer certain excuses, as well to avoid imputation which might be objected against her unseemly execution of so bad an embassage, as also to infer persuasions on the behalf of him by whom she was sent, was prevented by the widow ; who told her that she marvelled to see her there at that hour, considering her former conversation, which hath always argued her to be so friendly to virtue and enemy to exercise of idleness, that she would not let slip one minute of time without it were fruitfully employed. Whereunto the burgess replied with thanks for the good opinion she seemed to have of her and her doings, with desire to persevere therein till just occasion deserved the contrary.

" And touching my being here at this hour," saith she, " which you seem to term an idle vacation, if my message might be heard, and considered with no less indifference of you than the cause of my coming imports great and unfeigned necessity, you would, I am sure, convert that conceit into an opinion of virtuous inclination in me. For I am persuaded that the time employed in works of pity, and relieving the afflicted and dolorous company distressed with dole, is as well spent and no less meritorious afore God, than those moments and seasons joined to the continual yoke of extreme labour and toil of the hands. Whereof I would present you a particular discourse, if the report of my embassage would not be hurtful to the league of amity long ago practised between us."

Whereunto the curious widow (having already kindled in her heart the coals of disdain) answered, with a countenance

derived of the angry disposition of her melancholic mind, that, touching the report, she should be as weary with hearing the circumstance as unwilling to consider of the case. "And albeit," saith she, "I know not the intent of your words, and much less the cause of your coming, yet the calendar of my mind prognosticates the effect of your embassage to import requests of other consequence than mine honour will be able to brook. Wherefore, I pray you let me be deceived in mine expectation, and you so curious to keep the league of our ancient friendship, that the breath of your own mouth do not dissolve that which erst seemed indissoluble, nor you become the messenger of reports that anyway may seem indecent for a dame of your degree."

"Madam," saith the messenger, "the little sympathy and equality of affection which seems to be in you, in comparison of the virtues of him whose solicitor I am, hath moved, I think, this passion in you. Notwithstanding, for my part, being no less sorry for the present affliction of Monsieur de Virley, than desirous to relieve his distress with the uttermost of my endeavour, I have undertaken the charge of a messenger to deliver this letter" (which then she takes out of her pocket and gives to Zilia) "unto you. Wherein, as my faith lieth in pawn for the performance of my promise, so I beseech you on his behalf, refuse not his present, accompanied with a frank offer of his humble service, life, living, and all that he hath, to be employed only at the beck of your commandment. Wherein, if amongst the other beatitudes of virtues, given us by special name in the Scripture, the acts of charity, with endeavour to succour the afflicted and give consolation to the comfortless, be no less acceptable afore God than the rest, refuse not, madam, to relieve him who for your sake hath lost his liberty, languisheth in continual dolour, and is, for want of relief at your hand, to take his leave of us wretches in this world. With which just incitations to compassion, I join also this request of mine—that if the desert of my friendship may find place of favour in you, you will (the rather for my sake) open and read the letter, returning your answer by me—who have undertaken no further but the delivery of the same—and report your resolution touching the contents of his demand."

Zilia, besides the crabbed inclination of her own nature, being not acquainted with such kind of embassages, and less

wont to be courted with requests of the like courtesy, began here to enter into such a disposition of choler, that at first she was ready to wreak her malice upon the letter, committing it into a thousand pieces, and returning the messenger without any answer. Albeit, reserving by chance some spark of modesty, which ought to be incident to all women, she opened and read the contents of her client, not without signs of great alteration in her face, arguing lively enough the contrariety of thoughts which seemed to quarrel in her mind. For within less than a moment of time she changed colour twice or thrice, sometime pale like the cross of Diana, which, being set against the sun, loseth by and by the glory of his borrowed light, and returned immediately to a crimson, not much unlike the flourishing dye of the fragrant rose, glistening in his Orient colour in the pleasant mornings of the spring. Notwithstanding, having read and overread with these alterations the sum of his demand, being not able any longer to conceal or moderate the passion of her ire, clawed her neighbour with this crabbed answer:

"I would never have thought that under the outward show of your virtuous conversation, whereof you have been no less noted than commended by the mouth of all men hitherunto, had lurked such foul fruits of abominable substance. and specially in a desire to become a colcarrier of letters in the favour of love. Wherein, as you have seemed to weigh the reputation of yourself and the renown of mine honour in the indifferent balance of your own light judgment; even so, if the law of friendship did not stop my mouth and make me dissimulate that which I think, or if any other had been the messenger of these affairs, I assure you the publication of the fact should have made her honour no less notorious and subject to perpetual infamy hereafter than I seem to make dear account of my chastity; which, I would you should know, is armed with more assurance than to be shaken with any assaults of these follies. Wherefore, if you be as careful to live in quiet, without a scandal hereafter, as I am absolutely resolved not to diminish the title of my honour by any act of mine own, let this first fault dissuade you to wade any further in the enterprise of so small commendations; seeing that she that is either minister or messenger in these amorous traffics, or a furtherer of such practices of love, is no less

guilty afore God and her conscience, than if she were either pillow or bolster to the detestable fact.

"And for mine answer to Seigneur de Virley, whose demand I detest no less than his folly deserves: if he have opened his ears to the enchantment of love, let him expulse the enemy with a countercharm, by reason, or else make the best of his own bargain; for, seeing his disease comes of himself, let him expect no consolation at my hand; for I had rather be a friend to death than favour the least jot of his demand. Wherein, for a confirmation of my resolution, I intend henceforth to bar him all means of access to my presence: wherewith, on my behalf, you may salute him."

The lady messenger, seeing herself in this sort clawed where it itched not, and no less ashamed of her sharp repulse than sorry that her medicine was of no better operation on the behalf of her patient, seeming notwithstanding to be little moved with the angry complexion of Zilia, desired that God would reduce the difference and inequality of their diseases into a sympathy and equality of passion,—"I mean," saith the madam, "that you may be taken out of this conceit of cruel disdain, which makes you incapable of reason, and he restored to his liberty, which he cannot redeem but by the assistance of your goodness." Wherewith she took a short leave and departed.

And being arrived at the lodging of her knight, she found him all plunged in extreme dolour upon a field-bed, with more arguments of death than likelihoods of life: who, whether he felt some signs of ill luck by the secret instigation of his heart (which commonly prefers divers conceits of fear when the mind is occupied with doubt), or whether the sorrowful countenance of the messenger did signify her ill success in his suit, or what it was, I cannot tell, but, as his neighbour was entering into the report of her answer, he stopped her mouth, and prevented her meaning with this exclamation following:

"What state is more wretched than he that liveth doubtful of himself, with despair of dispense from disquiet by any assistance of time or other mediator on his behalf? Who is wrapt in such misery, or hath more cause to complain, than he to whom Fortune hath vowed a continuance of her malice, without hope to reclaim her favour? Is there any penance greater than to be punished with continual passion; or plague

of more mortality than to consume by piecemeal in the flame of languishing dole? Ah! unfortunate gentleman! how unhappily art thou fallen from the felicity of a life full of pleasant liberty, with exchange of thine ancient bliss for a tribute of torments more supportable than death! How happy and thrice-blessed was thy estate, enjoying the sweet maidenhead of thy affection and use of freedom, without awe or controlment of any; where now, alas! the torch of a contrary experience yields me the effect of a thousand deaths, without licence notwithstanding to die, whereby I would dismiss every plague that stayeth the fatal desire of my dying heart.

"Wherein hath Fortune this cause of displeasure against me, if not that she is disdainful of the quiet which we wretches find upon earth, and such an enemy to the common contentment of us all, that only to manifest her power amongst us, she, upon a sudden chokes, our pleasant thirst and desire of free life with pills of passions and annoys of more bitter taste, than any gall tempered with the most strong rhubarb that ever came out of Alexandria; committing us in the end to a martyrdom of more extremity than the pang appointed by death to break in pieces the force and strength of the heart? Whereof who is a more familiar experience than the miserable Philiberto; who, in exchange of his former quiet and contentment of will, hath caught, alas! a captivity more cruel than he that is condemned to end his days in the bottom of a dungeon. Ah! madam, how your countenance argueth the small regard which Zilia hath of my pain! Full well do I see, alas! that she neither makes account of my letters, nor useth pity to my distress and much less gives any credit at all to your honest friendship, which I confess I have greatly abused in procuring you displeasure for the ease of my disquiet.

"Let love bear the blame, and I the just penance of mine own indiscretion, that so rashly have entered the sea of my own sorrow, and saw, at setting from the shore, sufficient arguments of mortal evils threatening my present peril. Wherein, albeit, I was flattered at the first with a calm and pleasant ebb, which made me hoist sail and float without any fear; yet, in the very inconstancy which all men attribute to that element, and unruly waves raging without measure in the height of that troubled sea, appeared plainly enough

the likelihoods of my present danger: which I would had power to destroy me, by some sudden shipwreck, or cast me speedily into the bottomless gulf, to be devoured in the throat of some monster in the merciless ocean. Ah, Love! with what justice could I exclaim against thy infidelity; for that thou hast always flattered me with an assurance of that which now I find furthest from me! Hast thou a policy to persuade a credit in that wherein thou meanest absolute deceit, and then to triumph in the thraldom of such as believe thy charms? If this be thy order of dealing, why bearest thou the title of a necessary virtue, or impartest thine authority with the powers above?

"For my part, if there were cause of hope, or expectation of delivery, I could in some sort qualify the rage of my present annoy with imagination of future redress, or if the continuance of my grief argued a likelihood of contentment hereafter, the remembrance of my felicity to come would mortify the pangs which now I am forced to feel with release of pain. But alas! to what end do I imagine a composition with him that is not leviable to any order, and much less partaker of the noble virtue or gift of pity? Why do I plead for grace in a court of common cruelty, where tyranny shuts the gates of compassion against complaints of justice. Or to what end should I expect so much as a simple offer of help in him who is born the common enemy and destruction of many? Is there expectation of remedy in him, whose breath is a poison more infective than any venom that erst hath been made by the most cunning enchanter that ever was bred in the miry vale? Or is there reason to depend upon the delivery of him, who lieth in ambush to assault me in worse sort than yet I have felt?

"Ah, cruel mistress! full evil do you measure the circumstance and effect of my goodwill, with protestation of vow never to depart out of the lease of your commandments. Sure, if your waspish mind would confirm and make good the consent of your beauty, or that your inward parts would give leave to the outward arguments, to work an effect of that which they promise by show, I should not have cause to lament such lack in you, and much less endure this extremity by hoping for that which I know I shall never have. Oh! could recompense and unthankful return of the loyal zeal I have borne without spot of dishonest intent in any sort!

Ah! serpent and masked basilisk, in whom is rather a feigned show than true effect of thy courtesy, the only glances of thine eyes have had power to fill every corner of my heart full of poisoned infection! Wherein, at least, if I had the assistance of any art or drug to remove thy forces, I should be restored to mine ancient quiet, and thou live at rest, without the noise of so many importunities.

"And now do I see an experience of ancient opinion touching the malady of love, who is neither healed by salve nor cured by art. For to make incision to the sore would give but increase to my pain; and to use the application of medicines were but to feed the time with uncertainties; and to stay the humour were enough to give end to my life by present suffocation; so that, alas! I see no choice of remedy than to be touched with the hand that first gave vent and set abroach the cause of the wound; that I wish (in full satisfaction of all my torment) that she might see the very depth and furthest part of my heart, to the end she might be judge of my loyalty, and acknowledge the wrong she doth to the virtue of my honest meaning. But alas! I find herein that my destinies contend against my desire, and the view of her former cruelty makes me despair of other favour than such as hitherunto I have found; so that, as I wholly depend upon her goodness, and my life poiseth only in the balance of her good-will, so I know she is fully resolved in a contrary disposition against me, making a jest of my humble suit and offer of service, takes pleasure in my martyrdom, and repose, a special felicity in the points of my peculiar and mortal grief."

Which he ended, not without such abundance of tears and supply of other sorrow, that the messenger was forced to abandon the place, and leave him in the midst of his passion, imparting, notwithstanding, the points of her answer to a dear friend of the knight, with advice to supplant his affection or else seek his remedy by some other means. Wherein, albeit he performed the endeavour of a friend everyway, yet the success argued a small virtue in his diligence, and the patient rather resolved in extremities than able to admit anything which imported a moderation to his grief; the which grew immediately to such extreme terms, that the strength and desire of the stomach was converted immediately into a contempt of necessary sustentation, and, in place of sleep,

he embraced the offer of vain conceits, appearing as it were by vision, through the mystery of hollow dreams ; refusing conference with all men, if not that sometime he would complain upon the cruelty of one whom he would not name, with desire to end his life in the pursuit of that quarrel.

The physicians were found at the end of their wits, both unable to discern the cause of his disease, and without skill to give a remedy to his evil, what inspection soever they made in his urine, or trying of his pulses, or other signs to judge his grief, or any authority of their art. Whereupon, the gentleman, his companion, entered into such terms of sorrow for the sickness of his friend, that his dolour seemed of equal quality to the passion of his companion ; not ceasing, notwithstanding, to solicit the good-will of Zilia by his own travail and letters, which put her in remembrance of the pity that women ought to use to the afflicted, presents and promises of no small price, with other devices, wherein he judged any virtue to move her haggard disposition. And for that he saw that in the very view of her presence consisted the recovery of his friend, he forgat not to entreat her with terms due as he had sued to the greatest princess of Spain or Italy.

Wherein, notwithstanding, he gained as much as if he had undertaken to number the stars, or stay the course of the sun ; for that she excused herself upon her widowhood, and how evil it became a gentlewoman of her estate and calling to commit her honour to doubt and honest name to question, in visiting the sickness of one who is neither parent, nor ally, nor almost anyway known unto her. Which as it drove him from further attempt that way, so, weighing the distress of his friend, and the virtue which nature hath given to one woman to entreat another, he thought it a piece of policy to give a second charge of her who first broached his request to his cruel mistress, to whom he preferred such reasons as he accounted of force to persuade her ; sometime alleging the pity which naturally is incident to all women, and when, and upon whom, it ought to be exposed ; he preferred also the glory with names of immortality which diverse of foreign time have won by semblable virtue.

Wherewith he won a second grant of her furtherance, so far forth as at the instant they went together to the lodging of Seigneur Virley ; in whom the very view of his ancient friend and next neighbour stirred up a more increase of

sorrow, forcing him to a further complaint than afore, with desire chiefly that he had never made experience of her faith, nor the cause to attempt the friendship of her whose cruelty in preserving her honour is greater than is necessary, and compassion less than is convenient for his distress, proceeding only of an honest zeal, without intent of violation of honour or honest name. Which, with diverse arguments of ghastly regard accompanying his last words, wrought such effects of pity and remorse in the honest matron his neighbour, that, to prevent his further danger, she gave him the assurance of her uttermost, in boarding eftsoons the goodwill of his coy mistress; with protestation of warranty, that if he were delivered of his sickness, she would procure a mutual conference between him and the cause of his unjust torment.

Whereunto albeit he gave little credit—for that he thought it was but a broth brewed of artificial liquor, to feed him with drops of uncertain consolation—yet, in the very offer of her friendship appeared a hope of speedy delivery, which she promised eftsoons in sort as you have heard; willing him to repose himself wholly in the virtue of her endeavour and word. Which seemed to breath an air of such comfort and force through all his parts, that, defying the malice of his late sickness, he seemed even then to lack no part of his former health; neither had he need of restoratives or force of confections to confirm his recovery, or assistance of staff or crook to support his feeble limbs, weakened with so long sickness; but persuading a wonderful felicity in the very remembrance which his mistress seemed to have of his distress, he imagined to sit already in the paradise of his pleasure, dismissing immediately the messenger, who, careful for her part to put her promise in use, attended the offer of convenient time to work the effect accordingly.

Wherein she was assisted with a special favour of fortune, who, for the more expedition of the matter, brought Zilia and the lady messenger to meet within three days in one pew or close desk in the church; where the solicitor of Seigneur Virley, forcing certain tears in her eyes, began to practise for her client in such sort that, what with repetition of the passion of the knight, special reproach against the cruelty of women in those cases, with general commendation to the virtue of such as declare compassion upon the distress of the afflicted, she wrought her to a remorse of his pain, with

consent to prevent his further peril with a simple offer of the view of her presence, and that under terms of condition, that from and after the time of such friendship, he should disclaim all importunities in the pursuit of further favour.

Wherewith she enjoined him only a liberty of an hour's conference the next day at two of the clock in the afternoon : " where," saith she, " I have more regard to the extremity of his distress with desire to stop the course of further danger in him, than to give him any cause at all to make his profit of this friendship, or persuade a hope of further favour in me hereafter ; praying you, for your part, to give him in strait charge, neither to break the moment of appointment, or exceed the limit of his time. Wherein as I repose a chief credit in your honesty ; so, if the success answer not my expectation, assure yourself your virtue cannot escape without slander, and the best part of your faith remain in question for ever."

Wherewith they departed, the one to her lodging, converted wholly into device with what terms she should answer the day following the folly of her foolish lover, the other repaireth to her passioned Virley, who, despairing still of the goodness of Zilia, prevented the report of the messenger by asking her what news, and whether his mistress were still shod with her metal of ancient tyranny or no. " That you should try yourself," saith she, " if you have the heart to meet her to-morrow, in her house, at the second hour after dinner, according to her own appointment."

Which brought such new joy into all his desperate parts, that he fell of embracing the bringer of that gladsome news, offering her the choice of a thousand thanks, with liberty to dispose of him and all that was his at her pleasure ; thinking the exposition of his life to a thousand perils, for her sake, was far insufficient to countervail the greatness of the pleasure she had procured him in that simple appointment ; which he promised to perform the next day, according to the hour, with intent to endure whatsoever it pleased Fortune to bestow upon him. " Against whom to strive," saith he, " albeit is as though a man should make war against himself, whereof the victory cannot be without double danger ; yet am I determined to embrace her doom, although the same contend against my felicity."

In which, or such like terms, he passed the day, which seemed to exceed the space and compass of a year to him that

liveth in expectation of friendship at the hands of his mistress ; with whose snares he was taken, without that he had liberty to give judgment of the malice of a woman, when she is disposed to spit out the uttermost sting of her venom. And, sure, that man is far from the guide of discretion, that is touched with the fury of such charms, seeing the danger of so many thousands tasting of the like abuses ought to warn us to eschew such evils in ourselves. Neither have they done such wrong to themselves as general discredit to the whole masculine sex ; for that, without wisdom, they have become subject to them who have their being in this world for no other respect than to depend upon the will and commandment of the man.

But as this mortal enchantment, proceeding of the beauty of women, both pleasant and hurtful to men, seems to be tipped with a certain virtue of delight, drawing the fondlings of the world to be in love with the cause of their own destruction ; so I am of opinion, also, that it is a kind of punishment, which God hath appointed to plague and torment us for our offences that way, seeing that the most of us nowadays, sipping of the cup of that infection, do convert the remembrance and care which we ought to have of the estimation of virtue, into a special affection towards our fond fancies ; seeking our felicity and quiet in the tomb wherein is shrouded the top and root of all our mishaps. Besides, virtuous and chaste ladies are not so simple, nor void of discretion, but they behold afar off, and are privy to the meaning of, these frank offers of service and loyalty, set finely with diverse colours of feigned virtue ; not doubting, also, that such masked lovers differ nothing from the venomous scorpion, whose poison lieth altogether in her tail ; for that the end of such love argues a subversion of the renown and former virtues of a man.

Which falleth out rightly in the sequel of this Virley ; who, thinking to have made a great conquest in the victory of free conference with his unkind mistress, is now upon the way to her palace (or rather, path of his own misfortune) with more contentment, I am sure, than heretofore he hath received disquiet by his former torment. And, being now in the base-court of her lodging, he found her in a low hall, attended upon with one gentlewoman only, where, after certain cold greetings, intermeddled with a countenance of

counterfeit joy on her part, she slented at his sickness with these terms :

" If every evil were as mortal indeed, as it is made by report, a slight salve could not so soon cure so great disease, nor improved medicines work such marvellous operations in so short a time, specially upon so dangerous a grief as yours, Seigneur Virley, seemed to be, by the report of all men unto me. Which shall serve me as an undoubted experience hereafter, that the passions of men be of no longer abode than the subject of their affection appears before their eyes. Neither be they other things than certain mirrors or looking-glasses, wherein albeit are represented the very likeness or figure of them that behold them ; yet taking away the object or cause, and the form vanisheth also, as the puff of wind passing along the strait of a plain or deep valley."

" Ah ! madam," saith he, " how easy it is to devise of my disease, and hard for me to hope for remedy at your hand that doubt of the greatness of my passion ! And easily may he prefer either mirth or sorrow at his pleasure, whose mind is free from conceits of doubt or despair ; where the heart truly passioned dreads to make declaration of either of them, lest, in exceeding in the one, or seeming too much a niggard of the other, the show of either of them bring his suit of honest intent in jealous suspicion with them in whom only resteth the cataplasm of his sore : so that I account him now the most unfortunate man, whose state is unhappily brought under the awe of such two mortal extremities.

" And, for my part, if I were as free from the extreme points of affection as you seem far from reason to doubt of the greatness of my grief, I could with better will allow your discredit in the faith and inconstancy of men ; but, alas ! he that is caught with the snares of true love, can behold no other figure, nor make other likeness, than of the true cause of his affection, the picture whereof remaineth for ever within the surest part of the heart ; which indeed (as you say) is the true mirror, wherein appeareth not a feigned shadow, fading with the form, but a continual view and remembrance of her by whom we live in such heavenly contemplation. In which dial, or looking-glass, I have imprinted the true effect of the thing which, by virtue of due merit, ought to restore strength to my present weakness ; dealing so extremely with me from the first time of this contemplation, that the only

offer of hope to restore in the end my delayed parts hath hitherunto prevented the effect of utter destruction to every piece and member of my body.

" And touching the arguments of health which you note in me, I am to yield you alone all homage and honour for the same, for that the favour which I find in this present appointment and conference with you, hath stirred up this glee of good liking through all my parts, with more contentment of the happy encounter than my former griefs gave me cause of extreme distress. And yet my martyrdom hath neither been so small or secret but the whole world hath witnessed my pangs ; and you also might have believed them, if either the sorrow of myself, or report of such as took pity of me, hath been of credit with you. Whereof, also, I am yet to endure a more hard share (if it may be imagined by any brain) so that the same were able to force a remorse in you on my behalf.

" For the greatest felicity I have in this world, is to have the favour of any commandment at your hand (what peril soever it import), to the end my diligence and ready endeavour to do you service therein, or your other affairs whatsoever, may justify the vow of my unfeigned heart towards you. Like as, also, I persuade myself to be raised from a hundred thousand deaths together, when I imagine but a simple compassion in you touching the torment I suffer for your beauty. Wherein, if ever I had reason to take pleasure, by a delight which nature hath wrought in the thing, I am sure already to have had my part of a thousand annoys, by the regards of cruelty I have found in you. Cancel, at last, good lady, the commission of former torments, and cease henceforth to plague him that is ready in the place to commit his body to any sacrifice for the ransom of your favour. What moveth you, alas ! to a discredit or doubt of my pain, with opinion that my passion is dissembled ? Let the sundry sort of tears, heretofore distilled on the behalf of your discourtesy, so many days brought to end with continual sorrow, and nights drawn out at length with draining sighs, yea ! the present view of my pale and ghastly ghost, persuade you of the contrary, with assurance of my undoubted loyalty for ever."

Wherewith he beheld her not without a vent of sudden tears trickling along his cheeks, and she, for her part, regarded

the earth with a face full of disdain as it seemed ; which, notwithstanding, he construed to a profit of his suit, pursuing the same eftsoons in this sort :

" Ah ! madam, have you the heart to deface the glory of that divine beauty of yours, with an act of more tyranny than ever hath been noted in any woman of former time ? Or account you it a virtue to kill him who dieth every hour in the very view and remembrance of the heavenly perfection, wherein you only excel all that ever have been called fair ? If you have resolved my ruin, why stay you to do execution ? Abridge, good lady, my lingering torment with a present dispatch and end of life. Defer no longer the fatal ministers of your will, seeing you are agreed to perform the effect ; and suffer at last my watery eyes to stop the streams of their ancient sorrow, derived of the only view and remembrance of the mistress of their contemplations. Whereby my heart shall also sip the last syrup of desperate hope, and my affections vanish with the decay of my body ; who is here, ready to become your fatal harbinger in the other world, with hope to reap there the hire of my present merit."

The lady, whether her anger would give no longer place to his complaint, or that she doubted a force or charm in the same to overthrow the fortress of her chastity, gave him the look of a waspish mind, reprehending his rashness with these or such like terms of reproach :

" If my patience would yet give leave to your fond discourse, I see no want of desire in you to attempt me with requests ; which neither is your part to prefer to one of my condition and calling, nor yet my honour can brook to hear of the mouth of such as seek but to seduce the honesty of chaste ladies. Wherein, as you have exacted upon the friendship and facility in me to hear the uttermost of your suit, presuming, belike, of my consent to depart with that which you cannot restore me again ; so, besides that the present experience of your foul intent shall serve me hereafter as a warranty against the assaults of such offers, either in yourself or any other equal to you in disposition, I can give no other answer to the terms of your request, nor favour to your foul attempt, but that from the instant you cease to solicit me, either by yourself or any ambassador on your behalf ; protesting unto you, for my part, neither to be seen in the street nor other place of public being, so long as you are in the country, and

much less suffer the access of any gentleman within my house, unless he be my near parent or ally. By which means your importunities only shall punish me with a sorrowful restraint and absence from the society of my old companions and friends."

Which last resolution seemed such a mystery to the mind of the unfortunate Virley, that, for the time, he stood as enchanted, or one newly dropped forth of the clouds, till at last, as one wholly converted into despair of further favour at her hand, he craved only, for consideration of his pains past, and last farewell of his loyal faith to her, a kiss, which he said should satisfy his longing at full, and discharge her of further pursuit according to her request. The malicious lady, noting the fond desire of the knight, and with what small cost she might now rid her of the importunate suitor—meaning, notwithstanding, to depart with so small a favour but for a price of great penance to him that sought to buy it—told him that, as well to satisfy his present request as also to make a further proof of his faith, she would perform the full of his last demand, if he would give her assurance, by the faith of a gentleman, to do one thing wherein she was to require him.

Which the simple Virley did not only promise by all protestations of religion or oath, but pawned also the majesty of the Highest for performing every such commandment as it pleased her to enjoin him. Wherewith she seemed satisfied touching the assurance of his consent, and thereupon entered into the effect of her own promise, embracing and kissing him as if it had been the first night of their marriage, requiring him in like sort to become the master of his word and avouch the points of his late grant. The poor gentleman, suspecting no one thought of such tyranny in his mistress, and much less that he should buy his kisses at so dear a price, told here he attended the only summons of her commandment, to the end she might witness his ready endeavour to obey her.

She enjoined him, that from that hour till three years were expired, he should become mute, without speaking in any sort to any creature living, how great soever his occasion appeared in the true observing. "Whereof," saith she, "shall appear an experience of your faith which also may force hereafter a further benefit for you; where the contrary will not only discover your villainy but be ready to accuse you of perjury on the behalf of a gentlewoman."

Methinks I see the perplexed countenance of the poor knight, who, hearing the sentence of his hard penance, judged as great injustice in her for taxing him at so cruel a rate as difficulty in himself to perform the effect of so strange a charge. Albeit his heart was so great, and he so papistical in performing his vow, that he began even then to enter into the points of her commandment, declaring by signs that she should be obeyed. Wherewith he gave her an humble reverence and retired immediately to his lodging, feigning to such as were about him that the extremity of a cold rheum, distilling from the parts of the brain, had taken away the use of his tongue. And because his dumbness should not be a grief to his friends, nor they move his disquiet in demanding the cause, he determined to be a stranger to his country till the years of penance were run out. Wherewith, committing the order of his affairs at Moncalieri, or elsewhere in Piedmont, to the credit of such as he thought meet to supply the place of such trust, took two or three of his familiar companions to assist his voyage; which he directed rightly into France, as a country most meet for his abode, chiefly for the mortal wars as then between Charles the Seventh and the valiant Englishmen possessing his country in the year 1451.

And as the king was then in camp in Gascony, with intent to pursue the goodness of his fortune, and deliver his country altogether from the English nation, he addressed himself and force to the Duchy of Normandy; where this Piedmontese knight, being in the camp, was known by and by to diverse chieftains about the king, as well by his notable service they had seen him do in diverse places, as also great credit he hath had afore with the Earl of Piedmont—who after became Duke of Savoy, where was great repair of the nobility of France, for that he married Madame Yolande, second daughter to Charles the Seventh.

After they had a while lamented his lack of speech (not knowing for all they could do the cause of such disease), they presented him afore the majesty, with such commendation of his virtue and valiantness in arms as was necessary for the worthiness of the same: which forced a great liking in the king towards him. Albeit his outward appearance argued sufficiently his inward dexterity that way; which also he confirmed in public view, in an assault which the king gave to

the Englishmen within Rouen, the chief and only bulwark of the whole country of Normandy ; where Seigneur Philiberto gave such effects of his forwardness, that he was the first that was seen upon the walls making way to the soldiers to enter the breach and town.

Wherein, not long afore, the Duke of Somerset had burned the counterfeit prophet of France, called La Pucelle Jeanne ; whom some prating Frenchmen do affirm to have wrought marvels in arms during those wars ; but chiefly, that under the conduct of her, our countrymen lost Orleans with diverse other holds in those parts. And for a memory of that forged idol, they keep yet, amongst other relics, in the Abbey of St. Denis—which I saw in May last—a great rusty sword ; wherewith they are not ashamed to avouch that she performed diverse expeditions and victories against the English nation. Which seems as true as that which they are ashamed to put in a chronicle of credit touching their Saint Denis ; whom they affirm was executed at Paris, and came from thence with his head in his hand, which he buried in the abbey. Albeit they say he rested four times by the way, where they have founded four crosses, with the headless image of Saint Denis holding a stony scalp in his hand.

But to our Dom Philiberto, whose forwardness and fortune in the last assault, being well noted of the king, began to kindle a credit in the mind of the majesty towards him, in such sort as, besides special praises given to his worthiness in the hearing of all his captains, he presented him with the state ot a gentleman of his chamber, with pension sufficient to maintain the port of that place, promising besides an increase of his bounty, as he saw a continuance of his good service. For the which the mute knight gave the king humble thanks by signs, lifting his hands towards heaven as a witness of the faith he promised to keep without spot to his prince.

Whereof he gave good declaration not long after in a skirmish, procured by the French against the English soldiers, under the guide of the only flower of chivalry of that time and valiant captain, the Lord Talbot ; whose virtue made him so famous in those wars that the very remembrance of his name procureth a terror to the stoutest Frenchman that this day liveth there. In this skirmish (if a man may credit a French brag) the Piedmontese and Talbot met and unhorsed

each other. Whereupon the king, in consideration of his present service and increase of further courage, to continue his soldier made him captain of diverse holds, with charge of fifty men-at-arms, with promise (in the words of a prince) that hereafter he should find in more ample manner in what sort princes ought to consider the service of such whose virtue brought succour to the necessity of him and his people.

Wherein truly a prince hath great reason not only to bestow rewards upon such as deserve well, but embrace that which carrieth a likeness of his own nobility; seeing that virtue, in what place soever she take root, cannot but bring forth good fruits; the use and effect whereof ought to appear upon such as approach or resemble the place where the first seeds were sown. Neither doth any degree of men (according to the opinion of Pliny) deserve so well of his prince as the soldier. "In whose wounds," saith he, "are enclosed the safety of the whole country, and quiet of the seat royal." Neither doth he shrink to adventure his body against the enemy, to establish the repose of his neighbour at home, who, to requite his many dangers in the field, or relieve his maimed limbs, consumed with the wars, commits him at his return to the rigour of justice, and that, most commonly, without cause of just offence.

Whereof I think no one country of Christendom is able to furnish so many examples of that misery as the state of England; where, as (God be praised!) hath been no great occasion of war since the happy reign of our most blessed Queen that now governeth; so (the Lord and Her Majesty amend it!) it is a pity to see how slenderly soldiers be provided for, and how tyrannously they are persecuted by the malice of caterpillars in cities, and franklins in the country. Whereof I wish some such as I could name to muster in the mouth of a trench, or stand in the face of a breach, to the end they might both witness the danger and be partakers of the peril of war: which I doubt not would force in the most of them a compassion touching the soldier; whom, also, they would defend from being devoured of the gallows by their malice. Thus much on the behalf of soldiers; towards whom I wish as indifferent a care in time of peace as they are ready and most sure to abide all danger when it pleaseth the prince and realm to call them to service.

And now to our dumb knight, who, embraced of the king, with honour of all his captains, was assisted with a second means of further credit with his prince. For that, immediately after the heat of the wars in France, and the country resolved to a quiet stay, it pleased the king, for the solace of himself and general contentment of his captains, to call a tourney royal on horseback; where Seigneur Virley, enjoying the benefit of his former fortune, won only the glory of the triumph.

Which gave such increase to the good opinion of the king, that he entered into counsel to cure his dumb disease, grieving, not a little, that so valiant a gentleman could not declare his device; which seemed to argue no less wisdom for the direction of a commonwealth or country than the force and agility of his body had sufficiently approved his virtue in diverse exploits during that war. Wherefore he dispatched several letters throughout his own realm, with special requests to the countries adjoining his kingdom, that who could give remedy to his evil, and convert his present silence into a liberty of free speech, should have ten thousand francs for reward.

Then might a man see such a muster of physicians and surgeons, with their apothecaries carrying their bags and boxes of all confections, that their route seemed rather a new supply of power to assist the king against his enemies, than a convocation of gownsmen to consult of the disease: who began also to make such war with the ten thousand francs, skirmishing one with another, not so much for the glory of the act as gain of the money (without any help notwithstanding to the sick man), that the king was driven to add to his golden offer an express condition, that whosoever undertook the cure, without performing the effect within a certain time, should make good the said sum to the commodity of the king, or, for want of payment, to leave his head in pawn. Which proclaimed immediately a general retire to Monsieur le Médecin with the rest of his mystical crew; and wiping his nose with the inside of his sleeve, detested with impiety both Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna, with other patrons and ancient fathers of physic, that would not leave them a sufficient net to fish so great an honour and riches as ten thousand francs.

The bruit was no sooner made, than the officers of same undertook to disperse it into every corner of the country,

with participation of the royal edict and liberality of the king to every province, as well on this side as beyond the Mounts. Whereupon, Moncalieri became partaker of the news, and Zilia (the first and only cause of all) was privy by this means to the place of abode of her penitential lover, and also persuaded of his loyalty in keeping his promise, unworthy anyway of such firm regard; seeing that where fraud and force do occupy the heart, the religion of promises, yea! the very bond of faith already given, do lose their force; neither is a man bound to perform that wherein is constraint of bond.

The covetous widow, assuring herself of no less authority over Seigneur Virley than when he made court to her at Moncalieri, determined to go visit him at Paris, not so much of intent to undo the charm of his dumb disease, as desirous of the ten thousand francs; whereof she made as sure account as if they were already under the surest lock in her closet at Moncalieri; persuading herself also that the gentleman (being absolved of his promise by her) would gladly consent, and that she only should have the reward and fame of the thing wherein all others were able to work no effect.

Here you see a woman whom neither the virtue of honest and true love, nor intent of unfeigned and loyal service, could erst move to compassion (and much less agree to give ease to the sinister affliction of her servant) wrested to a remorse, and overcome with a desire of filthy gain to enlarge her riches. O execrable thirst and desire of money! Until when endureth thy authority over the world; or how long wilt thou blind the minds of men with a foggy mist of filthy lucre? Ah! insatiable and perilous gulf! how many hast thou devoured and drowned in thy bottomless throat, whose glory had pierced the height of the clouds, and virtue shined more clear than the brightness of the sun, if the dark veil or shadow of thy contagious infection had not eclipsed their renown that way! The fruits, alas! which thou bringest forth (what sugared show soever they give outwardly) yield, indeed, neither honest fame nor true felicity to such as reap them; seeing that, that dropsy and infecting humour, which overrunneth all their parts, makes them more desirous of the thing than able to be satisfied: whereby groweth a double discommodity to the evil of that which is the only fountain of all mischief; neither is any state more miserable than to

have desire to have much, and, getting all, cannot be satisfied with anything, and in the end overthrown in their covetous travail by infamous death.

Whereof I am content to omit the familiar proofs of our time, and present you with the authority of the rich Crassus in Rome; to whom was awarded the punishment of God, by falling into the hands of the Parthians, for violation and committing sacrilege within the Temple of Jerusalem. Septumuleius, frying in like sort in the flame of money, and wholly infected with the poison of him that torments the heart of the covetous, cut off the head of his patron and only defender, Caius Gracchus, tribune of the people.

Wherein, touching like examples in the feminine sex, I will now pass over both foreign and familiar records, and restore to your memory the abuse of this Zilia, who, forgetting her former regard to virtue (the only ornament of her honesty and reputation), feared not also the toil and travail of the way, nor other inconvenience whatsoever, to commit her life to danger, and honour to the mercy of him, in whom the remembrance of her former wrong stirred up a desire of double revenge upon the least occasion he could find. Neither doubted she to hazard the effect of her business in a strange region unknown to all men, saving to him for the only honour of whom the mystery was wrought: but, using a short consideration for the order of her affairs at Moncalieri, she strips the Mounts, and, by extreme labour, arrived at last at Paris, at such time as every man despaired most of recovery of the dumb knight.

Albeit, inquiring for them that had authority to admit such as undertook the cure, she made it published that God had put the remedy of his disease into her hand, and that only she doubted not to perform the expectation of the king that way. The Commissaries laid afore her the edict, with the condition of death in the end if the knight were not made to speak within fifteen days. All which she admitted, and pawned her life for the performance of the enterprise, with protestation, eftsoons, that God had opened unto her a secret means to restore him.

Whereof the knight was forthwith advertised, marvelling, notwithstanding, what strange gentlewoman it was that had undertaken to undo the charm of his disease, and force him to break the vow of his penance to his cruel Zilia; in whom

of all others he accounted not so much friendship, as to make so long a journey for the ease of the evil whereof she only was the cause. He was rather of opinion that it was his neighbour of Moncalieri,—she, I mean, that first solicited Zilia on his behalf and now had forced her to a compassion of his penance, with commission to absolve him of the rest of his hard vow.

Whereof, as he devised diversly, without staying upon any certainty or truth, behold! the deputies present Zilia in the chamber of Seigneur Virley; who, seeing an effect of that which erst he was not able to imagine, gave judgment by and by of the cause of the coming of his enemy; and that the promise of ten thousand francs had more power to make her pass the Mounts, than the respect of friendship or compassion to his strange distress, which so long had kept him in the likeness of a dead man.

Wherewith, the view of her former incivility and rigour, exceeding the disposition of any woman that ever was noted cruel, procured immediately a conversion of his ancient love, and regard to her beauty, into a mortal hate, with desire of vengeance equal to her offence; thinking it no grudge in conscience (in accepting the offer of his fortune) to yield detestable homage, indeed, to the saint that erst accounted all his service but effects of idolatry, and to return her friendship with a tribute of the same money with the which she made him taste the fruits of an inordinate cruelty; as well for his own contentment in acquitting so good a turn with semblable payment, as also to leave example to all coy and disdainful dames to shun the like abuse towards any honest gentleman; and that, having regard to the merit of the persons, and specially to the reputation of themselves, they become not so prodigal as to make a vent at a vile price of their honour, which they ought to defend, and keep without spot, against the assaults of the most honest and virtuous lover that ever offered to serve under the flag of any beauty, how clear soever it shone.

And yet how many of those do we see nowadays who will not stick to deny the service of such as proffer them love, as well for the respect of virtue as desire to embrace a fading glee of flickering beauty; and after commit themselves to open sale to who will bid most for them: which kind of Venetian Madonnas, as I wish to be barred the society of chaste ladies, and not suffered to sit amongst the most arrant

courtesans that ever were, having any spark of zeal or friendship in their heart; so they had but justice (in mine opinion) if the benefit or liberty of every commonwealth were taken from them, to the end they might wander as a kind of marked people of all the world. For she that loveth for money, and makes a gain or certain revenue of the use of her body, will seldom make conscience to betray him to whom she gives continuance of friendship; seeing her love (tipped with a desire of gain) tends altogether to ends of evil and acts of tyrannous effect. Wherein, as the honest sort of women are always defended by the integrity of their conversation and life, so I crave a patience in the rest, touching the punishment I wish upon them, and speedy amendment of life, to the end their virtue may make them as meritorious of reputation indeed as some of them are undoubtedly unworthy of the use of life or benefit of common air.

Seigneur Virley then, having Zilia in his presence, and almost at commandment, feigned not to know her, refraining from all offers of humanity, either saluting her comings by signs of thankful countenance or otherways; which at the first moved no small astonishment in our widow, who, notwithstanding, seeing she was entered into an enterprise the effect whereof she saw could not be performed without the loss of honour or life, made of necessity a virtue, with resolution to commit her to the mercy of her Fortune, and make a last proof of her goodness, what inconstancy soever is given unto her of all men. Wherewith, desiring the rest to retire, she shut the door and took the knight by the hand; whom she beheld in the face, and with a smiling regard asked him if he had so soon forgotten his dear Zilia, or if he had the heart to make so small account of her in that place, yielding her not long since such authority over him and all that was his at Moncalieri.

"Dissemble no more," saith she, "to know her who hath stayed for no pains to come hither to acquit you of your promise, with request to pardon the fault I have made in abusing the virtue of the honest love you bare me. It is I who, lamenting my former cruelty, am here to do penance for the wrong I have done you in restraining the liberty of your tongue, and taking revenge of my former rigour, am to yield tribute to your rare loyalty; with more readiness to dismiss the charm that so long hath kept your tongue

enchanted, than ever I had reason to add so cruel a recompense to your honest desert."

All which seemed to move as many words in the dumb knight as there is life or feeling in the senseless rock standing in the midst of the sea. And seeing him make signs that it was not in his power to speak, nor move the enchantment of his tongue, she was forced to recharge him with all sorts of kisses, embracing and culling every part of his face and neck, not without great store of tears, wherewith she bedewed each part of his bosom and outward garments, using the assistance of every means wherein she judged virtue to make him tractable to her request. Which, notwithstanding, he returned with a solemn silence ; and forgetting his ancient ceremonies, and amorous orations which he was wont to use as persuasions of pity to his lady, he alleged now a dispense from speaking by her commandment only, practising altogether (by signs) the use and execution of that which erst he had so hotly pursued, both by suit and long service. Wherein as he seemed somewhat awaked by her, that long had kept his mind in a slumber and drained his body both of desire and courage, so he sought in like sort to set abroach in her an appetite of that wherein she hath been erst no less curious than strange.

Wherein she, for her part (more to prevent the peril of life and loss of the penal condition, than for any respect of friendship to the knight), made him the master of his request, with consent to use her at his pleasure, and frank possession of that which he and all lovers account the chiefest felicity in love. Wherein they lived with equal contentment until the end of fifteen days (the term appointed to cure the knight) without that the poor widow could make conversion of her dumb patient into a man using the liberty of his speech ; albeit she laid afore him in how many sorts she grieved with her own folly in binding him to so strange inconvenience, and the penance she had done losing her honour, to satisfy his pleasure and absolve him of his vow.

All which seemed as Hebrew songs to Seigneur Virley ; who, determining to play double or quit with her, thought it necessary to add a further fear to her former loss, to the end she might feel her part of danger, as well as her cruelty had made him pine away in secret sorrow the better part of two years : which he performed accordingly for the term expired ;

and the knight nothing altered from his ancient order of silent disposition, the commissioners summoned the lady widow to perform the points of the edict, importing two choices of peremptory extremity, either to pay ten thousand francs (which she had not, nor was able to get), or make good her promise with the loss of her life, which she was sure to perform without a special grace of the king and that by the intercession of her enemy.

What was now the refuge of this lady, distressed on every side, if not to retire into tears, dropping with streams of present sorrow in the remembrance of her former cruelty? "Ah! unhappy and thrice-wretched lady that I am," saith she, "brought to due desolation and punishment by shame, for an effect of cruelty exceeding the barbarous disposition of the Turk, or Moor, or other infidel without religion or faith. In seeking, alas! to deceive another, I am fallen into the danger appointed to give end to my life. Was it not sufficient for me to be warned of the revenge of mine enemy by mine own rigour used towards him, but that I must attempt his courtesy, and willingly fall into the malice of him who, triumphing in the spoils of mine honour, goeth about also to take from me my life, and mortify my renown for ever?

"Why fell I not alas! into the jaws of some wild beast in passing the Alps, or threw myself headlong from the top of some craggy mountain, whereby I should have prevented the stroke of his malice, who seeks to make me a wonder to the multitude for attempting a thing which rests wholly at the will and pleasure of him whom I had so heinously offended? Ah! Seigneur Virley, how can you bestow such cold consideration on the pleasures wherein I have been so liberal on your behalf? Or what moveth these regards of disdain, with desire to have the life of her who, if ever she offended, hath already performed the penance of her fault? And what offence is so great which is not satisfied with amends for the trespass? Which if I have not already answered, let my tears make good the rest of your rigorous sentence.

"Imagine, Seigneur Virley, what a virtue it is to forgive; where the extremity of revenge is the foulest vice that occupieth the heart of man. And for your part, as you have made yourself known to the world by your continual felicity in all your affairs, so stick not to make an increase of your glory by

preventing the peril of her who, lying prostrate afore your knees, bathing the same in suds of her sorrowful tears, doth also kiss your feet in sign of repentance of her former folly. Ah! let me not die for my simplicity, nor mine honour put to sacrifice, as a revenge of the little wrong which, I confess, my chastity hath done you! Take not, alas! so cruel vengeance upon so small an offence; neither suffer the blood of my life to quench the thirst of your malice that have already paid treble tribute in respect of my fault."

Wherewith, meaning yet to continue in terms of complaint, the sergeant criminal (with authority from the king) arrested her to prison; whither she went with small constraint as weary already with the view of her present misery, and loathing the use of longer life, having lost the chief support of the same. But the knight, pinched with some remorse touching the passion of his dear Zilia, thinking her sufficiently punished for so small offence, went immediately to the king, to whom, in the hearing of his lords, he makes discourse of his love passed, the cruelty of Zilia in binding him to a vow of silence for three years, and the present revenge he hath taken of her discourtesy, with humble request in the end to moderate the rigour of his justice, both to her and others that were in prison for his recovery; "seeing," saith he, "the same depended either upon her that bound me to that charge, or else upon the assistance of time, which at last would have dissolved my dumb trance by the accomplishment of the thing which my faith bound me to perform."

The king marvelled not a little to hear so strange a history, rejoicing notwithstanding in the happy return of his speech, and giving singular commendation to the loyalty of the knight, condemned presently the cruelty and coveteousness of the widow; upon whom had followed execution accordingly, if it had not been prevented by the special intercession of Seigneur Virley, who, taking her out of prison, accompanied her certain days' journey, as well to show her the king's liberality in diverse towns and holds which he had bestowed upon him, as also to satisfy his appetite at the full with the fruits whereof he had felt erst so pleasant a taste. Wherewith, also, she did not much mislike, for that the proof of such favour, unlooked for, took away the pain of her late imprisonment justly deserved: besides, her late despair of life made her double thankful to the author of her liberty; which she

embraced with more contentment than when she knew not what it was to lose the pleasant taste of free life.

Wherein may be noted an experience of the dealing of Fortune, who keeps in store like punishment for all such as, reposing too much for themselves in their own force, do defy that little which they account to consist in others; and in respect of their own power, do condemn the authority which other men have. If a vain glory and conceit of a chastity invincible had not deceived this lady, or a desire of covetous gain bleared her eyes, it had been hard to have judged her incontinency, which appeared both in her frank familiarity towards the passioned knight, and also in the greedy desire to fill her purse and carry away the praise from all others that undertook the enterprise. And yet, as you see, her gain hath given a dishonest title to her name for ever, with an occasion to the enemies of women to cry out of the whole sex.

But there is no reason that the fault or folly of one should impair in any sort the nobility of so many virtuous and honest ladies, whose chastity and honest convey of life defends them against the cruelty and coveteousness of this Zilia and such as resemble her in any sort: who, after certain days of recreation with her lover, retireth into Piedmont, where she drew forth the remainder of her years in continual grudge and fret of conscience, with firm persuasion ever after that the force of man is nothing where God doth not work by His grace; without Whose assistance we can neither learn that which is good, nor defend ourselves from the danger of any evil. Like as, also, if we want that guide in our doing, our works (smelling of nothing but the corruption of our own nature) make us seem not much unlike the loathsome swine, wallowing in a dirty or muddy puddle, to increase her filthiness.

TWELFTH TALE

PERILLO AND CARMOSINA

THE ARGUMENT

ACCORDING to the Latin adage, every vice, how perilous soever it appear, hath power to work in some degree the operation of a special virtue. For albeit the sundry enormities growing daily amongst us by the unbridled humour of our affection, which we commonly call love, argue the same to be a passion of most dangerous and perverse corruption, yet we have experience of wonderful effects of virtuous modesty wrought by that common evil; as the whoremonger and adulterer reduced to a repentance and moderation in his pleasures, the tyrant and murderer moved to compassion touching the cause of the innocent, and the unthrift reclaimed to an honest stay of life, which makes me of opinion that this passion (given us by nature), albeit it be an infection of itself, yet it serves also as a counterpoison to drive out another venom, according to the property of the scorpion, which of herself, and in herself, carrieth the sting of mortal hurt and ointment of speedy remedy, the occasion of present death and means to preserve life: not meaning for all this to persuade that it is of necessity we make ourselves subject altogether to this humour of good and evil disposition, nor allow them that willingly incur the peril of such free imprisonment; but placing it for this time amongst things of indifferent toleration, because he neither seemed blind nor void of discretion on the behalf of those whose examples I mean to prefer in this history. I may boldly avouch that which we call affection to be a passion resembling in some respect the condition of true amity, and not much unlike, for the most part, the general evil which the Grecians call *philauty*, and we term by the title of love, or vain flattery of ourselves, chiefly when we see any so friendly to his desires, that, to satisfy the inordinate thirst or glut of his greedy appetite, he forgets both honour and honesty, with the respect and duty of his conscience.

Besides, what images of virtue, courtesy, or bountiful disposition soever our lovers do imagine in them whom they serve, dimming the eyes of the world with a mist of dissembled substance, as though the cause of their liberal offer of service were derived of an intent of honest friendship, yet their travails that way conclude, we see, with other end, for that they hunt only the chase of pleasure, proceeding of the view of an exterior beauty. Wherein their meaning is sufficiently manifest in the sugared orations and discourses of eloquent style, which those amorous orators seem to prefer, when their minds (occupied wholly in the contemplation of their mistresses) do commit the praise of the perfection in their ladies to the filed forge of their fine tongue. In which, what other thing do they more chiefly commend than a divine mystery or cunning work of nature painted with a dye of white or red in the face, a delicate tongue to dilate of matters of fancy, an enticing countenance, with a grace and behaviour equal with the majesty of a princess? All which as they argue the vanity of them that repose delight in such fondness, differing altogether from the true ornaments of the soul, or pattern whereby the perfection of virtue is discerned by the unfeigned works and absolute action; so, dismissing this fond philosophy, not contending greatly whether Love be a natural corruption or a thing participating with virtue, we may be bold to avouch his power to prevail in things which seem of impossibility to the other passions that be common unto us.

For what thing can be of greater force in a man than that which, constraining an alteration of custom, and breach of that which by continuance hath taken root within us, doth make as it were a new body, and the mind a mere stranger to her former cogitations? Which I neither infer without cause, nor maintain this argument without great reason, for that, as of all the vices which spot the life of man, there is none (except the execrable sin of whoredom) which makes us sooner forget God and good order than the detestable exercise of unlawful game; neither are we so hardly reclaimed from anything as cut-throat delight; for that it is almost as possible to convert the cruelty of a she-wolf or lioness into a present meekness, as to mortify the desire of play in him which hath been nourished and nozzled therein from the beginning of his years. Even so, notwithstanding, the force of love wrought such a mystery in an unthrift of Naples, that, of the most

prodigal and riotous spender that hath been noted in any age, he made a most staid and sparing gentleman that Italy hath brought forth of many years, since or afore his time. Albeit, even upon the point and beginning of his new foundation, being ready withal to expose fruits of his happy change from evil to good trade, he was encountered with the malice of his destinies, which abridged his felicity and life in one moment: whereof you may discern a manifest proof in the sequel of the history following.

It happened not long since in the rich and populous city of Naples, who nourisheth ordinarily an infinity of youth of all degrees, that, amongst of the wantons brought up there at that time, there was one named Antonio Perillo; who, enjoying a liberty more than was necessary to one of so young years and green understanding, made absolute declaration (afore the race of youth did stop in him) what it is to pass the years of correction without the awe of parents, tutor, or controller. For his father having performed his journey which nature appointed him in this world, resigned his body to earth and his goods and possessions to his son, who, finding so many golden coffers and chests full of treasure to assist his prodigal and wanton disposition, forgat not immediately to enter into the trade of a licentious life: wherein he found no stay nor impediment to his wlll, for that the negligence of his father had left him without the awe or authority of any.

And albeit in the life of his father he was a continual haunter of the *Berlea*, or common house of unthrifty exercises, where, for want of sufficient deniers to furnish his desire, with skill in casting the three deceitful companions of black and white upon a square table, he was forced oftentimes to forbear to play, and learn cunning in looking upon; yet time, with his own diligence, made him so artificial, that, being but a crier of aim, there were few able to exceed his sleight in casting twelve afore six of two dice, or took half so good account or regard to the course of the cards. And yet, notwithstanding, he was not so well grounded in the principles of his art, but oftentimes—his cunning beguiling him—he was prevented with a contrary sleight, and only his purse paid the charge of the whole company.

Which was not unmarked of some two or three of the familiars of his father, the respect of whose friendship and

virtue, with sundry arguments of imminent destruction to his son, moved them to enter into terms of admonition, laying afore him the circumstance of his sundry faults, but chiefly reprehending the great wrong he did to his own estimation; for that the way to attain to renown of virtue was clean contrary to the vicious path of idle play; wherein he walked with more delight than belonged to the son of so good a father.

They gave him examples of the destruction of many, and not one that used that idle exercise died either with honour, wealth or estimation; that it was the shop and storehouse of all murders, blasphemy, perjury, theft, gluttony, whoredom, with an infinity of other mortal inconveniences; and in the end, when play had left his purse without a living, and he not able any longer to feed the vein of that humour but by unlawful means, he should be paid with the hire of them who, without commission, scouring the plains, do prey of what they find, and after yield account to the hangman upon the fatal hill, with a scarf or collar of cord about their neck in token of glory. They required a regard to the honour of his ancestors, but chiefly not to discredit the honest life of his late father. "For that," say they, "as the upright doing of the child living sustaineth the renown of the father being dead, so there can happen no greater infamy to the son than not to make good the virtue and civil parts of his father." For end they advised him to dismiss his prodigal trade of life afore he were utterly bankrupt of patrimony and possession.

But he, not liking to be pinched so near the quick, and much less to hear the secrets of his fault so plainly deciphered, replied according to the discretion of our wilful youth nowadays, given wholly to feed upon the appetite of their foolish fancy, that, touching the companies he haunted, they were no worse than such as were nourished in the houses of princes and familiar companions to the greatest lords of the country. And for the rest, as he was not to yield account of his life to any of them, so he wished them to bestow that care upon their own children: for him, he was of sufficient years to govern himself and give convenient order to such affairs as belonged to his trade. Wherewith he stopped the further reply of the old men; who, noting the arrogant terms of this princox, committed him to the meed of his own folly, judging no time convenient to reclaim him till he had felt the smart

of the whip of famine and penury, with other pinching extremities attending the end of an unthrifty life.

But he that seemed invincible against all good counsel was made tractable by him that plieth the most strong and stubborn upon earth ; and that which men account the only blindness of the world, unsealed the eyes of this youngling, and so took away the veil of his arrogant folly, that, acknowledging every point he had offended, he was not only privy to his own fault but also partaker of the penance. And as one poison driveth out another, and no one vice that is not subject to the correction of another fault, so, by that invincible impression which the poets have painted in the shape of a blind boy, properly called Love, this gamester was not only forced to a speedy change and alteration of life, but also, after sundry and sharp showers of adversity, restored to his ancient entire and place of honour and estimation.

For, at the same instant, within Naples sojourned a rich merchant, blessed at God's hands chiefly with a fair and virtuous daughter, called Carmosina, whose only beauty made more breaches into the heart of Antonio Perillo than the grave admonitions of the elders or any other of his friends. And albeit he was as it were so bewitched and drowned in the devotion of play that all times seemed hateful which brought him not fresh supplies of gamesters ; yet, having once glanced upon the glistering eyes of this young girl, he could not so well govern his encounter, that not only the desire of that idle exercise was clean mortified in him, but also he suffered himself immediately to be enrolled in the book of loyal lovers, in such sort as he never delighted so much in any play at the dice, as now he doteth upon the beauty of Carmosina.

Who, for her part, noting sundry enticing glees which nature had lent to the young man, together with his bountiful disposition, with brave attire and courtlike wearing of his apparel—which, as it is one chief allurement that summons the affection of a woman at this day, so the fond woman will rather delight in his small waist and exterior proportion, than embrace the virtue and gifts of commendation in a man —thought it an effect of equal courtesy to return his affection with semblable love. Wherefore, if he felt any torment, her passion was nothing inferior, which also grew to terms of double grief on both parts, for they durst neither use the credit

of any messenger to discover their dark meaning, and much less were they assisted with means of conference or access together; for that the maids there are bound to a more strait task of liberty than in our country; but for the opinion of their chastity, I leave it to the judgment of them that have had indifferent experience of both the places."

But Perillo, as most hotly assailed and least able to resist the alarum, and feeling a taste of that whereof he was ignorant in the operation, and doubting altogether of the accident till nature made him understand the mystery, entered into his labyrinth of endless annoy, raving and raging with hollow dreams, with doubt which of his wits he might most boldly employ in bewraying his vehement affection to the new mistress of his heart; of whose good-will if he had but a simple assurance by the breath of her own mouth, he seemed not to doubt anyway the consent of her father, for that the inequality of degree and honour rested on his side, persuading withal that the merchant would willingly admit the alliance, because the marriage would bring a medley of honour into the base and dark complexion of his house.

But in this account he forgat the chiefest charge, and that which at this day is most respected in making of marriages, I mean wealth and possessions, whereof Perillo had already made merchandise, and exchanged the most of that which was his for a simple remembrance of vain delights passed; neither did he consider the condition of his present state, with diminution of his ancient fame and honesty by a general bruit of his unthrifty life. All which notwithstanding, Love forced him to try the ford, and sound the heart of the fair Carmosina, assisting him also with a means to have the acquaintance of an old matron, her outward governess and inward credit of heart, whom he dandled with such peppered persuasions and infections of certain crowns falling willingly into her pocket, that she gave assurance of her help to the uttermost, both in following and soliciting the matter, if it were once set abroach by himself. Which he performed by her the next day in a letter of this or like effect:

"God forbid that any part of my body should refuse to condescend to that which my heart hath already vowed, touching my humble service on your behalf, good madam; whose only beauty, ceasing not to maintain continual quarrel

with mine ancient quiet, hath restored me to so general and mortal a passion, that, without the present dew of pity distilling from the speedy consent of your favour, I doubt whether nature is able any longer to give nurture to the feeble parts of my weary corpse. And seeing the intent of my affection is not only void of all dissembling and flattering abuses in the virtue of true loyalty, but also imports a meaning and humble request of lawful marriage, I crave hereby a confirmation of your good-will touching the same; to the end that, with the consent of your favour, I may march with more assurance to demand you of your father. I need not prefer the honour and nobility of my house to move you to indifferent consideration of me, seeing yourself can decipher sufficiently the particularities of my whole descent; neither put you in remembrance of the authority which of long hath been due to mine ancestors in this public weal, for that you are not ignorant of any part of the same. All which if they lack force to move you to just compassion, dispose yourself, good lady, to the view of my present martyrdom, and measuring the justice of my merit with the greatness of my grief, to send the messenger of speedy consolation to him who, pining in his labyrinth of unfeigned loyalty, attends the happy news of your consent, and in the meanwhile doth humbly kiss the hand of the paragon Carmosina.—Your loyal servant, ANTONIO PERILLO."

The girl, not erst accustomed to receive such embassages, seemed to prefer some little astonishment at the first view of the letter; not that she misliked the contents, but to prevent cause of suspicion in her whom she needed not have doubted, if she had been privy to the resolute league between her new servant and old governess; who also, for her part, forgat not her to apply the cataplasm of her promise; for, commending the sundry good parts of the gentleman, persuaded her that it was an effect of virtue to aid the affliction of such as suffer distress, and that her honesty could noway stand in awe of slander in requiting a most loyal and unfeigned love with reciprocal affection. "Besides," saith she, "in the alliance consists a decoration and increase of honour to your house." Wherewith endeavouring yet to spur her, who of herself was sufficiently bent to run that career, wrested at last not only an equal love in the girl, but also a confirmation of

the same by a letter, which she returned unto him under these terms :

" As well by the roundness of your letter, sir, as relation of my governess, I understand the frank offer of your unfeigned friendship. Wherein, as the justice of your merit moveth me to expose to the uttermost of the consideration that my power is able to perform, so I grieve that any restraint should be an impediment to the liberal recompense of the large honour you offer me by my parents ; from whom albeit must proceed the chief and principal answer to your demand —for that the yoke of dutiful obedience keepeth the grant of my good-will under the awe of their consents—yet, seeing the vehemency of your love (which hath divided himself into a sympathy or equality of affection in us both) and reposing much for myself in the integrity of your meaning, I wish my father would rather admit your present request than deliberate upon the choice of other husband for me. Wherefore my advice is you give a charge of his good-will, with such terms as you account most convenient to feed the humour of angry old men : the expedition whereof I commit to the vehement suggestion of your inward desire, which (without the consent of my parents) I cannot satisfy otherways than with a simple zeal ; whereof I send you herewith the articles of assurance, sealed with the unfeigned faith of your most dear and loyal

CARMOSINA."

The operation of this answer seemed of such force in the heart of Antonio that he imagined he embraced at the instant the fair Carmosina, persuading already a resolute consummation of the bargain by old Minio her father ; to whom, with more haste than good speed, he declareth the next morning the honour and honest love he bare to his daughter, with desire that he would admit him for his son-in-law. Wherein his expectation was not only frustrated, for that the reply of the merchant seemed to exceed the compass of his conceit, but also imported terms of reproach ; and reprehending his disordered youth, he advised him that afore he went about to marry, to learn some trade to redeem his possession, or else procure such competent portion as might both sustain himself and family, and also prevent the miseries of old age, if God blessed him with so long a time in this world.

"For," saith he, "I will not commit my daughter to any but such as, having sufficient to maintain her estate, is also careful to increase that which God and fortune have imparted unto him; neither shall the respect of your pleasure move me to condescend to the misery of her whom you say you love; for I wish rather to see the just destruction of the one, than the indifferent desolation of you both; marvelling also that love hath stirred up this request in you, seeing that if you honoured Carmosina in such sort as you say, you would also be careful of her advancement; but as I see and know well enough that the wanton instigation of a foolish appetite so moveth you to make a demand of that which shame and reason forbid you not only to pursue, but also persuade you to exclude utterly out of your remembrance, so let these few words suffice for a resolute answer, that the view of your unthrifty life hitherunto, with the needful condition of your present estate, makes you unworthy and unable to enjoy her, whom otherways you should have found me no less willing to have joined in consent than you desirous to demand her in sort of honest marriage."

These last words and answer not looked for of the old merchant brought no small perplexity to our poor Perillo, who, by the vehemency of his passion, was forced to abandon the place, and retire to his lodging, where, with tunes of great dolour, he entered into a survey or view of his former life, in this sort:

"Is it possible," saith he, "that poverty shall bring me in contempt, and keep from me the use of the thing whereof I made so sure account? Or is the remembrance of the idle exercises of my wanton youth past the only impediment to this new alliance with Minio? What reason hath he to deny me the title of his son-in-law, and much less to hear me scarce speak in the demand of his daughter, if not that he seeth so general a diminution of the portion and possession that were left me, by my inordinate and prodigal trade of life; fearing also that play, consuming me by piecemeal, will leave me in the end neither revenue nor renown, nor scarcely a simple remembrance of the house whereof I took my beginning? I would mine eyes had been sealed, and hands tormented with the quivering palsy, when first I learned the subtleties and sleights of cards and dice. I wish I had been bound to a task of painful toil without release from travail when

first I gave commission to that idle trade, to supplant all desire and necessary care in preserving the entire of my father's remain. How unhappy was I, alas! to kick at the counsel of such as, reprehending my follies, preferred an affectioned care of my commodity! Why was I so unthankful to their zeal, and unwilling to follow their advice?

"If I had put a bridle to my pleasure, I had eschewed this hard penance of my unthrifty youth, which now I find (alas, too late!) to stand most need of the admonitions of riper age. Ah! I would I had sooner sipped of the cup of love; to the end that, being brought to the knowledge of that whereof I find too late an experience, I might have preserved the greatest part of that which I have already lost. But what? Shall my disaster passed take away the hope of a future fortune, or mortify all expectation of the assistance of a better time? Or is it a virtue to despair in distress? No! let rather the view of my disorder passed put me in remembrance to retire to a new government and trade of life; in such sort as, with an honest endeavour to make store of that which is left, and reclaim the rest that is gone, I may give absolute argument to the world of a change and amendment of life: which, also, may convert the hardness of the heart of Minio into a disposition and desire to confirm the honest league which I crave at his hands."

Whereupon, he put such expedition to his new device, that, in one instant, renouncing every point and circumstance of his former life, he was transformed from the form and inclination of a second Acolastus into the shape of a sparing merchant. Wherewith, taking the advice of some of his friends, who also assisted his honest endeavour with some portion of money, he converted the small remainder of his inheritance into some three or four thousand crowns, with an intent to bear an adventure with certain merchants that were upon the point to furnish a voyage from Levant to Alexandria, a city in Egypt, builded by the great Alexander, being at this day the only trade of the east parts for all sorts of spices and other merchandise of great value; and from whence (for the most part) the Venetians, Genoese, Florentines, and other countries of Italy, keeping their bank and storehouses there, do furnish all Europe with such kind of necessary traffic.

The unfortunate Perillo, converted wholly (as you see) into a merchant venturer, with no less desire to restore his

wealth with the gain of his present trade, than erst he had delight to consume all in idle exercise, commits his portion to his fortune, and, amongst the rest of the adventurers, hoisteth sail, in hope of better speed than it was his chance to encounter. For they were not fifty leagues upon the main sea, when they were sharply assailed by an angry Neptune; who, misliking their voyage, set abroach the malice of the winds, forcing the sea to so high a billow and unruly rage of the waves, that the impetuosity of the tempest took away the force of the pilots and mariners, in such sort, as being no longer able to resist the fury of the storm, committed themselves and ship to the mercy of the waves, which ceased not to continue in extreme fury the space of three days and nights without intermission; in which time their fortune had put them upon the coast of Barbary, where the malice of the winds appeased, and the sea retired to his ordinary quiet. Albeit the ignorance of the coast and country (a common enemy to all Christendom) offered them cause of new fear, yet the view of their late peril passed mortified all suggestion of new sorrow, and procured them to a more congratulation than if they had already performed their expedition, and were safely arrived in the harbour of Levant.

But Fortune, who had yet another act of tragical malice to present unto these wretches, lay in wait to assail them with a second disaster, more extreme than the first, whose alarum made a conversion of their hymns and psalms of rejoicing into tears and dolorous exclamations. For as they lay at anchor in the evening, when the night began to cover the earth with his dark mantle, behold a pirate of the Moors (partaker also of the malice of their tempest) beset them upon a sudden with certain brigantines (most fit vessels to do a mischief in a calm), and charged them so hotly on all sides, that being already forwearied with the torment of their peril passed, and not able to expose sufficient resistance to their unruly force, were laid aboard with small effusion of blood, their goods spoiled, and themselves carried prisoners to Tunis, to live in extreme misery under the servile yoke of the barbarous nations.

Here, if the master cried out for the loss of his ship, the mariners to be deprived of their hire, and the merchants to see the spoil of their goods with hindrance of their venture, I leave you to be judges of the passion of poor Perillo, who,

despairing to be redeemed, for that his whole substance was committed to pillage in that misfortune, exclaimed against the iniquity of the gods, for that they seemed to favour his misery with a term of longer life. He wished death might make no stay to do his office, for that he loathed the view of his sundry adversities ; and yet he seemed to sorrow more in the loss of his fair Carmosina than in the despair of his ransom ; for the hard boards of the galleys being his bed in the night, the bare pennyworths and hungry share of victuals which his keepers presented him withal, the extreme toil and tugging at the oar, with the smarting whip now and then about his bare shoulders, did not so much torment him as the remembrance of his lost mistress seemed to force him to double dolour.

" Ah ! " saith he, " to what greater punishment or penance of hard toleration could fortune have enjoined me, than, in despairing eftsoons to recover her presence, to force me to record her absence in this dolorous and pining prison ? Had it not been better for me to have performed the rest of my pleasant life at home, and spent the remainder of my portion in the supply of my delicate trade, than lose my whole substance at one blow, and myself coffered in a wretched and stinking dungeon ? Here may be noted one chief fruit of covetous desire, and an effect of filthy gain, when the greedy mind, in going about to glut the appetite of his coffers, leaveth an example of his wretched folly to all ages. Oh ! how happy be they who, contented with the gift of a mean fortune, do not seek to load ships and remain from hour to hour within three inches of death, either to be buried in the bellies of the monsters in the sea, or, being cast upon some desert shore, to serve as prey to the devouring jaws of wild beasts !

" Was it not sufficient, alas ! to be touched with the experience of a repulse in love, but that I must feel the heavy hand and mobility of Fortune in an element more inconstant than the variable course of the moon ? Ah ! Carmosina, what wrong dost thou to my misery, if thy tears do not help to lament my distress, seeing that, in seeking to have thee to my wife, I am married to a heavy burden of bolts and shackles of iron ; and in place of my marriage bed with thee, my destinies have appointed me a pillow of earth in a dark and filthy hole ; where, notwithstanding, if there were any

offer of hope eftsoons to enjoy thy presence, I could easily digest the symptoms of my martyrdom, and, in attending the happy consent of such good fortune, to make a pleasant exercise of my present and painful imprisonment."

By this time fame had imparted the desolation of our venturers to the whole city of Naples, not without the general sorrow of all men, and special tears of such as were contributory to the loss. Albeit, making of necessity a virtue, time gave end to their dolour and dismissed them all with desire to redeem his captive friend. But Carmosina, knowing her Perillo to be one of the miserable number, and weighing the circumstance of his mishap, which stood upon terms of more extremity than all the rest—both for that, by the loss of his portion, she doubted to set him on foot again, and much more despaired of means to pay his ransom—entered into such present rage that she was ready to use force against herself. Whereunto she had put an effect, if it had not been for her governess, who, reprehending sharply her wilful folly, appeased at last (with great reason) her desperate intent, converting the furious humour of the desolate maid into a river of tears, distilling amain down her rosy cheeks, complaining notwithstanding with terms of grief the misfortune of her friend, but chiefly for that herself was the principal cause of his ruinous estate, and that the rude answer of her father forced him to abandon his country for the gain of a continual captivity.

"Ah! unfortunate girl," saith she, "and insatiable coveteousness in the old age of my father, who, in refusing the honest request of Perillo, respected more the mass of filthy treasure than the virtues or good disposition in the young man. Why would he not consider that the manners of men do change, and of a prodigal youth proceeds a sparing old man; neither ought we to despair of his recovery, who, finding the fault of his own folly, disposeth himself to amendment of life? What cause of care hath he either of the poverty or riches of his children after his death, seeing the remembrance of the world decayeth with the loss of life? Can he carry with him any care of our advancement, seeing he is forced to leave behind him the thing which is more dear unto him than the prosperity or health of his children? If he present me with a husband and portion of a kingdom, the offer of no millions shall mortify in me the love I bear my Perillo: neither

is it a virtue to sell affection for the price of money, and much less to seem to love him whom my heart cannot brook; for there is neither pleasure nor contentment where the mind is not in quiet.

"No! no! let him use the scope of his crabbed age, and do what he thinks good. For my part, I will not be disloyal on the behalf of him who, I know, honoureth me with sincere affection. Neither shall he lie long in prison, nor continue any time the son of poverty; for I know where be a company of ducats, which saw no light since I had use of discretion, which I doubt not will both pawn his delivery and furnish him with a second trade more fortunate, I hope, than the first. And for my part, the greenness of my age giveth me leave to suspend certain years without any haste to marry."

Wherein she demanded the assistance of her governess, who gave her not only a firm assurance of her aid, but also promised a supply of money towards the furniture of her expedition, desiring her, for the rest, to do away with arguments of dolour, lest the same discovered her passion to her father. Wherein as they consumed certain months in device to deliver Perillo, with secret practices in levying the price of his ransom, so Fortune began to enter into terms of pity towards him, and prevented the meaning of his mistress by taking him out of prison in sort as you shall hear. Wherein albeit she exceeded the maid with speed in execution, yet ought we to give the title of worthy thanks to Carmosina, whose example of virtue in this case I wish may summon a remorse to our light and inconstant dames nowadays; who are so uncertain in true affection, that the respect of present pleasure takes away the remembrance of their absent friend, and maketh them unmindful of the faith of their former promise. Wherein I am not provided to enter into argument at this present, both for that I doubt to gain displeasure in discovering a truth, and also such discourse is without the compass of my commission, which is now to recount unto you the delivery of poor Antonio.

Old Minio, the father of Carmosina, had joined with his riches and desire of worldly gain certain virtues and commendable gifts, as very devout in visiting the churches and places of prayer, of a charitable disposition in relieving the distress of the afflicted, and so full of compassion on the behalf

of the needy that seldom any poor man departed from him empty handed. Besides he extended a marvellous charity and act of pity to the desolate captives amongst the Moors, in such sort, as making every year a voyage into Barbary, he made an ordinary to redeem and bring away with him ten or twelve Christian prisoners; of whom, such as were able restored the price of their ransom without any interest, thinking the gain sufficient in that he was the cause of their delivery, expecting the meed of that virtue at the hands of God, with this only charge, that, in remembrance of the benefit, they would not forget him in their private prayers. The gift of wealth was not evil bestowed upon this merchant, considering he was thankful in imparting it to the poor, according to the admonition of the Gospel.

But how many may a man reckon in England that exceeds him in riches, and scarce one of semblable virtue? For the perversity of our age is come to that point that where our fathers and grandfathers delighted in works of charity, with care to supply the necessity of such as did want, our *helluos* and gulfs of riches do not only close their ears against the lamentable cries of the needy, but also make no conscience to despoil them, either by awe, fear, or flattery, of that little which their fortune hath left them; in such sort, that alms and devotion seem such strangers and so little known amongst men nowadays, that, of these few that succour the poor, the most part do it rather of vain glory, or to condemn the barbarous disposition of his neighbour, than for compassion on the behalf of him that stands in need. Hospitality is also so unknown amongst us, that where our ancestors builded houses, endowing them with sufficient revenues to sustain the impotent and needy persons, with free annuities and other means of relief, how many of the members of Christ do we see in our time, void of harbour to shroud their naked bodies, full of diseases, pinched with extremity of hunger and cold, ready to give up the ghost at the gate of the rich man, and not relieved with so much as the crumbs that fall from his table!

I borrow thus much on the office of the preacher, not with intent to charge him anyway with imputation of negligence in the pulpit, touching his admonition to his people to assist the distress of such as God visiteth with the rod of affliction, but, in presenting our merchants with a familiar example of the office and duty of a true Christian, to stir them to the

imitation of the like virtue ; and, in being ashamed that such as have gone afore us have carried with them to heaven all effects of charity, to dispose themselves to seem worthy of that which they have, by yielding a certain tenth, or tribute of their goods, to such as the Scripture termeth the deputies of Christ, asking it in His name.

But now to our father Minio, who, for that by the impediment of sickness was not able to perform his voyage to Tunis in person during the year of imprisonment of the Neapolitans, gave charge to certain of his factors to redeem ten captives of his country, or at least furnish the number with any that professed the Law of Christ : which was performed accordingly with such good fortune on the behalf of Antonio Perillo, that he enjoyed a participation of the devotion and benefit of Minio, and was sent to Naples, amongst the rest that were redeemed ; not being known, notwithstanding, of any of his co-prisoners or other of the company, for that they had not any great interview together, and much less of his familiar friends, seeing the penury of imprisonment had set a dye of hideous complexion upon his face, and his hair and beard, exceeding their ordinary length, had overgrown certain special marks which else had discovered him more easily.

But what can beguile the eye of a lover, or who is able to conceal from a woman the face of him whose picture she beareth in the bottom of her heart, and whose remembrance death himself is scarce able to deface ? Carmosina, who made her thought a looking-glass to behold every day the image of her Perillo, had no sooner glanced simply upon him but she knew it was he, who for her sake had passed the pangs of so many torments. Wherewith, no less glad of his return than he double doubtful of the continuance of her good-will, wrought so much by the sleight of her governess, that she had place of conference with him in secret ; where, after certain congratulations of his delivery, she exposed terms of comfort in this sort :

" Albeit," saith she, " Fortune hath been so incensed against you, that she hath neither spite nor malice in store, whereof you have not tasted to the uttermost force and extremity, yet your Carmosina hath neither forgot any part of the ancient good-will she hath borne you, nor much less entered into the least contempt that may be imagined : but

where a number of other ladies would have dismissed their affection at the first summons of adversity, I am here to avouch an undoubted continuation of zeal, with a treble increase of true love towards you. Whereof I am also to yield you a present proof in double sort, the one with an assurance of reciprocal amity until the extreme date of my days, the other, in consideration that your poverty proceeded by my means, I have provided a second supply of money to renew eftsoons your traffic, which, being guided by a better fortune, will yield you, I hope, a success of such commodity, as my father will deny you no more the title of his son-in-law ; whereof for my part I pronounce from the instant such confirmation as is in me to perform."

This news unlooked for stirred up a trance of such alterations in the troubled mind of Perillo, that, what with the greedy desire his eyes had to feed upon her beauty, which he had not regarded of long time but by inward contemplation, and the passion of present gladness in the assurance of her love, with a frank offer of speedy assistance to restore his trade, he had neither the use of his tongue to expose terms of thanks, and much less the consent of his senses to believe that which he heard. But as one Zenopholus attending the answer of his oracle, or suddenly stricken with a dumb apoplexy, stood as immovable as the image of Saint Peter in the Capitol of Rome, till she recharged him with certain bags of ducats, whereof she willed him to defray the value of his ransom to the factors of her father, and dispose the rest in a second venture for merchandise.

Which he performed accordingly with the benefit of so good time and fortune, that, sailing with a prosperous wind to Levant, he made his market to such advantage, that on his return to Naples, the increase and gain of his trade redeemed every possession which erst he sold, and left him besides sufficient to furnish his lacks in every respect ; in such sort, as the common judgment passed that his wealth was nothing unequal to the riches of his father, and his present state as plentiful of all things as the first day he seized upon the coffers and remain of old Perillo.

Amongst the rest of the friends of Antonio which rejoiced his happy fortune, Carmosina, I am sure, was not least glad, chiefly for that she saw her father begin to grow in delight with the doings of the young man ; who, for his part, also,

renewing a daily increase of affection towards his mistress, was in device by what means he might eftsoons board the good-will of her father, whom he judged could use small reason in refusing his request, seeing his riches were equal to the appetite of his greedy mind, and his possessions and patrimony nothing inferior to the best of the city.

Wherefore, for the more honour and solemnity of the demand, he sent his uncle to summon the fair Carmosina in sort of lawful marriage, with an offer of dowry at the discretion of her father; who, not ignorant of the league of long love between his daughter and Perillo, whom he knew to have first entered into change of life for the only respect of her favour, thought it as great conscience to condescend as they had reason to make the request. Whereupon, adding an effect of expedition to their present agreement, the bail of contract was drawn and the marriage published immediately between Antonio and the fair Carmosina, to the special contentment of themselves and singular pleasure of the parents on both sides; which, notwithstanding, was unhappily abridged, contrary to all their expectations, by the malice of a pitiful accident which fell upon them the very night of their marriage in the house of the old Minio.

It was in the midst of the month of June, at what time the heats, being most vehement, do force terrible thunders and rage of weathers in great extremity, by certain dry vapours and exhalations which the hot air draweth up from the dry earth; when, as our unfortunate lovers were new gone to bed, devising together of their sundry misfortunes since the beginning of their love; and as they disposed themselves to discharge the pleasant shot of marriage, behold! the elements above, converting themselves into angry regards, set abroach the roaring noise of the fearful thunder, with such impetuosity of blustering winds, that the trees and houses of deep foundation in the earth were not able to resist their fury, together with an unnatural opening of the sky, whereby the whole earth seemed to burn with a glow or fearful flame of lightening.

At last the air, not being able to contain the heat, was forced to avent; when a man might have seen fall, in waters and places of firm ground, diverse stones of sundry forms, some square, some round, some forked, and others long piked at both ends of the sharpness of a needle, derived, belike,

of the congealed substance of the heat and vapours of the air. Whereof (as the fear of the tempest had driven the bride and bridegroom to embrace one another) so one of the said fatal ministers of destiny, which we call properly thunderbolts, darted with such vehemency upon the one and other lover, piercing the place of life of them both, that it gave end to their pleasure and life at one blow.

Here you see, that he which escaped a marvellous peril of shipwreck, and was delivered out of the hands of the barbarians when he despaired of all relief, is not able to shun the fury of the heavens and inclemency of his fates, and much less to exceed the moment which his destiny determined upon him. Albeit, if there be any one spark of pleasure in such misfortune, he was assisted with a moderation in the greatness of his distress, both for that he died in the arms of her whom he loved no less than himself, and also had her company to his grave whom he could not enjoy being alive but in thought and inward regard.

Such was the end of his love. Wherein, sure, if Love were a creature of either sense or feeling, he deserved to be reprehended of injustice, for that he is partial and showeth favour, not only to such as practise the sleight of theft and stealth in amorous affairs—I mean such as, albeit they dare not avow their lascivous and wanton trade, yet he guides them safely to the prey of their desire and returns them without the offer of peril—but also giveth good success to them that, dissembling with the virtue of true loyalty, have no other respect but to satisfy the glut of their voluptuous pleasure: where, on the contrary, this unfortunate Perillo, embracing his wife in chaste and honest sort, was no less unjustly revenged than cruelly smothered by the fiery force of thunder.

Which strange kind of death gave no small amaze to the whole city of Naples, both for the rarity of the accident, and also the great wrong which the guider of amorous destinies seemed to do to the loyalty of the young man; who deserved a better consideration for his sundry distresses, than a fatal suffocation or deadly blow of the heavens, in the first beginning and earnest penny of his pleasure with his dear Carmosina; with whom he was shrined in a tomb of marble, with a certain epitaph in Latin, which I have here composed in our vulgar verse; which it may please your ladyship to imagine to hear pronounced by the mouth of the dead Perillo,

appearing half out of his grave, in his sheet, trussed at either end with a fatal knot, speaking with a voice of terror according to his ghastly regard.

THE EPITAPH

UPON THE TOMB OF PERILLO AND CARMOSINA

From cloddy couch rise up, consumèd corse !
You captive knights, whom Cupid strewed with care,
And lovers ye that live, come take remorse
On two that found such death as haps but rare.
See here the sheet that shrouds such faithful twain
As seld are found to serve in loyal train.

Four winters long I ran a careful race,
Wherein I found the fruits of crabbed fate ;
Nor could I get the grant of fortune's grace ;
But, pinched still with pangs of misers' state,
I felt the force of every mortal blast :
There was no ill whereof I did not taste.

My folly forced a fall of all I had,
And friends forsook me in my greatest need :
My rents retired with rout of roisters' trade,
And fancy fed me with the food of evil speed.
I sought to sow the seeds of stayed life,
When lo ! I cropt the fruits of greater strife.

And though the seas did spite my good intent,
Yet did they spare to spill me in their sands ;
But adding force to that which long my fates have meant,
My goods and I fell in the pirates' hands :
Where I, in person, pinched with every pang of care,
My penance paid with many a hungry share.

Nor was my love devoid of like annoy,
Since she with equal grief paid tribute to my pain :
She wore her youth in dole instead of joy :
The view of my mishaps bred woe in every vein :
Her pleasant time passed in continual tears,
Whose suds aye bathed her green and maiden years.

But oh ! give care ! when we by happy lot
Did deem to find the end of all distress,
And as in bed we hoped to change the note
Of former pain to perfect joyfulness,
Behold ! alas ! the flag of fatal wrath
O'erspread us both with pangs of present death.

O heavy hap ! O perverse destiny !
O lives aye framed in moulds of wretchedness,
And born to wear the wreath of misery !
From all that erst have felt distress,
He is most cursed whose state is so opprest
That in his life finds no one day of rest.

Resign your terms and tunes of ancient woe,
Who erst have wept in tears of equal grief.
No two alive, nor all that sleep below,
More loyal were, aye wanting still relief,
Than we whose pictures here are placed in deep,
And shrouded both within the fatal sheet.

THIRTEENTH TALE

GENIVERA *LA BLONDE*

THE ARGUMENT

The tragical chances happening to the unfortunate sort of this world, albeit, at the first, do present a certain bitter taste with unsavoury digestion ; yet who sifteth them to the quick, construing rightly every cause of their coming and virtue in operation, will not only judge them necessary for some respects, but also discern in them an indifferent profit and pleasure to all degrees of present being, but specially to future posterities, who may learn, by the view of former ills, to eschew the like harms in themselves. And because everything is appointed his peculiar season, and all acts cannot agree with every time and all places, I have devised, that as I began my histories with a comical discourse, so I intend to knit up with a tragi-comical report, treating chiefly upon the selfsame subject, which the fond do commonly prefer as a special coverture or shield of their faults.

The experience is not strange, nowadays, what humour of rage doth direct our frail youth, governed by the planet of love, and what mortal inconvenience doth and would spring thereupon, if reason served not in some sort as a moderation of our folly, even from the cradle to the full maturity of our age, qualifying besides by wholesome principles the heat of our wilful appetites. Wherein, like as amongst all the tyrannous enemies which afflict the body or mind of man, he only glorieth of force to alter our proper nature, what perfection soever it import, converting our liberty into a disposition of servile thraldom, guided only by the rein of his discretion ; so, amongst the number of authorities heretofore alleged for the proof of the same, I have thought good to prefer an example of our time, happening in a gentleman of Catalonia, who, declaring in himself by his too great constancy two extremities of love and folly, hath also painted out the picture of a gentlewoman no less light and inconstant than Love, and such as follow his lore, be vain, seeing the small virtue which assists

their fond endeavour, and slender commodity growing by their uncertain service.

Upon the confines of Catalonia, dividing Barcelona and the Mounts, lived not long since an ancient lady, the widow and late wife of a knight of that country, who left her only a daughter to supply him in succession, and give comfort to the desolation and old years of her mother; in whom appeared rather a fond zeal than awful diligence in the education of her child, for that she seemed more willing to flatter the vain humour of her young years, than careful to reprehend the arguments of wanton disposition appearing in the youngling. Who, besides her curious shape of body and limbs, with wonderful perfection of beauty, wherein nature glorieth yet of her cunning, was assisted with so fair a hair, falling by divine art into crisped locks, dividing themselves as it were by appointment, that the gold, purified and tried by the flame of the furnace, seemed but a dark metal in respect of the glistering glee of her curled hair; whereby she was called of all men Genivera *la Blonde*.

Not far from whose castle or place of abode was the dwelling of another virtuous widow, of no less estimation for her riches and large dominions than the other, and of equal honour and renown for honest life; who, having only the presence of a son to restore the remembrance of her dead husband, used no less care to bring him up in the discipline of every virtue, study of good letters, together with a participation in the exercise of all noble recreations convenient for a gentleman of his condition and calling, than the fair Genivera reposed felicity in the beauty of her glorious hair. Wherein, to assist the natural towardness of her son, she sent him to Barcelona, the chiefest city of the country; where Fortune favoured his diligence with such dexterity in all things, that, upon the eighteenth year of his age, his perfection in learning, with wonderful sleights in exploits of chivalry, gave cause of shame to all gentlemen and other degrees whatsoever nourished and bred up in the like exercises.

Which stirred up such contentment in the good lady, his mother, that she knew not with what countenance to cover the pleasure she took in the felicity of her son, a fault familiar enough to a number of fond men, and a vice common to all mothers; who, glorying in the towardness of their children,

do flatter themselves with an uncertain hope of their future virtue. Wherein they do indifferent wrong to their own imagination, and advancement of their wilful and wanton youth, who, blinded with vain persuasion of credit of their parents, do think themselves dispensed withal from further diligence, or to expose effects of other duty. Whereupon followeth oftentimes a number of indifferent mishaps to them both with cause of equal rebuke to the one and the other.

And pursuing the quest of my history, it happened in the flourishing years of this young gentleman, Dom Diego, that Philip of Austria, only heir to his father newly deceased, passing through France towards Spain to invest himself in the seignories of his late father, gave warning of his coming to the city of Barcelona; who, for their parts, entered immediately into device touching the pomp and magnificence wherewith they might do honour to the majesty of so great a prince as the son of the Emperor of the Romans.

Amongst other solemnities they dressed a rich and curious joust, furnishing the lists only with young gentlemen heretofore not greatly experienced in the use of arms. Whereof, as Dom Diego was chosen chief of the one part, so the king (for a more contentment to his subjects) being upon the scaffold to judge the lofty courage of these young gallants, had only his eyes upon the young Diego, with a wonderful admiration of his force in so young years, arguing an undoubted virtue with the increase of further age; to whom only he awarded the glory of the field, with protestation that in his life he had not seen a medley better performed, seeming rather a battle or combat of experienced knights, than an exercise of delicate youth, not yet accustomed to bear the burden of armour and less acquainted with the travail of war.

Wherewith, as well in consideration of the present towardness in the widow's son, with courage to continue his trade so well begun, as also to feed the hope and show of his future virtue, he was admitted the next morning into the order of knighthood, invested with the collar of Saint Andrew, and other ceremonies of Spain, by the hand of the said Philip; who, after he had fulfilled the date of his abode at Barcelona, pursued his journey towards Castile, leaving our new knight, Dom Diego, rejoicing not a little in his present honour imparted

unto him by his prince, retiring with the news of his good fortune to his own possession, and living more to perform the arrearages of his duty to his mother, whom he had not seen of long time, than with intent to make long stay there, or enter into delight with the pleasures that be in the country ; whereof, notwithstanding, he received so sure a taste that his captivity, in the end, exceedeth everyway in greatness of grief the restraint of liberty, or other mislike or impediment, he found at any time in the city.

Like as also the poets have imagined that Love, pitching his tents in desert places not apt to discovery, doth discharge his darts and arrows in the thicket of woods and forests, upon the border of the sea or shaded fountains, and sometime upon the height of the highest hills, in the pursuit of the nymphs of all sorts ; judging thereby a liberty and most sure way to treat upon matters of love, without suspicion, jealousy, envy, false report, sinister opinion, or common cry of the people, to be in the wide and open fields, where they may be bold to communicate their mutual passion without fear of witnesses ; enjoying also the pleasures of all kinds of chases, which the champaign doth nourish, with participation of the chirping harmony and natural music of birds, and sometime the delightful noise of sundry pleasant channels and silver streams, qualifying in their kind the vehemence of their languishing grief, and recording, also, with great ceremony the first place of their amorous interview or acquaintance ; arguing thereby treble felicity to such as, abandoning the sundry annoys attending continual abode in the city, do resort to the pleasant lawns in the country to yield tribute of their studies to the muse whereunto they be most affected.

So Dom Diego, being at home, loved entirely of his mother, and served with all dutiful obedience of his subjects and servants, after his ordinary hours of study were passed, used his chief pleasure in the exercise of the field—I mean, sometime to dislodge the great and lofty heart, to dress the toils to entrap the wild boar, and sometime to try the goodness of his hawk with the main wing of the heron or fearful partridge in the stubble fields or valleys environed with huge hills ; wherein one day amongst the rest, hunting the wild goat which he had forced from his habitation of the high and craggy rocks, he saw, lancing afore him, a hart which his

dogs had roused, and so hotly pursued, that (to his judgment) he seemed more than half spent.

Wherewith, as well for the pleasure which the pastime itself did offer him, as also to ease the travail of his hounds, he put spurs to his horse, forcing him to a main gallop; wherein he continued till his hounds, losing the track of their prey, were at default, and himself without the sight and hearing of all his men, with such ignorance of the coast where he was, that he knew no ready way of return to his company, and much less the place where his fortune had put him, grieving most in this perplexity that his horse, being out of breath, refused (for want of force) to carry him any further. Wherefore, after he had blown divers calls for his men, without other answer than an echo of the woods and waters, he divided his distress into two points, the one to dismount and ease the weariness of his horse, the other to retire back by the same path which brought him thither.

Wherein his expectation was no less frustrated than himself deceived by the malice of his fortune; for that, meaning to take the next way to his castle, he met with a contrary path, which, after he had travelled the most part of the afternoon, brought him, in the end, within the view of a stately house, builded upon the side of a hill; which, by certain marks appearing on the uttermost parts of the house, albeit argued the contrary of his intent, yet, hearing the babble of certain hunters, imagining the same to be his people, drew near the place, which discovered (above his expectation) a company of strangers, being certain servants of the mother of Genivera, which attended their mistress with a brace of young greyhounds that had newly run a hare to death.

And being thus encountered with this second misfortune, he grew also into terms of greater distress than afore, for that the approach of the night, beginning to expose shadows of darkness upon the earth by the departure of the sun, took from him all hope of other harbour than the offer of some hollow tree, or green bed upon the ground; when lo! the ancient lady, discerning between the view of her eye and regards of the clouds, which had not yet closed in the light of the firmament, the shadow of a man descending from the uppermost part of a hill with his horse in his hand, seeming by his majesty, marching with the semblance of a prince, to be some degree of honour, sent one of her men to know

what he was, who returned with answer according to his demand.

Whereupon, the lady widow with her fair daughter, indifferently glad of the approach of their neighbour—whom albeit they never saw, yet fame had made them partakers of his virtue and renown—went in solemn order to meet him, forgetting no kind of courteous greeting that belonged to the honour and estate of so noble a personage. Whereunto he replied with thanks according to the greatness of the benefit, with addition that he found himself greatly in the favour of Fortune, for that his painful travail in wandering so many hours had given him at last so fit an occasion to visit the house. Whereunto, he doubted not for his part to confirm the league of friendship begun and happily continued of long time by his parents and predecessors.

The lady, whose long absence from the court had not diminished her grace in courtlike conference, answered, that if they have greatest cause of contentment that gain the most, or if large benefits require ample consideration, it is she that ought to offer to fortune the sacrifice of thanksgiving, for that she had brought her a guest no less dear than the life of herself, and as welcome as if the King of Spain had done her the honour to visit her castle : which stirred up in him a second offer of his service, not only on her behalf, but also towards the least imp derived of her house. Wherewith Genivera, to assist the contentment of her mother in the company of the young knight, with the pleasure she took herself in his seemly conference, craved (in smiling order) a participation in peculiar of the liberal offer which he exposed by general terms to her mother and her whole house.

Dom Diego, which had not yet exceeded an ordinary regard in beholding the beauty of the young lady, found cause, in the mystery of her words, to glance with more judgment upon her ; in such sort that, at the instant, he felt himself assailed with such sudden alteration, that his astonishment would not give him leave to answer otherways than with a piercing glee of his eyes, feeding with firm contemplation upon the fresh dye of white and red appearing in all parts of her divine face.

Wherein, also, for a more decoration of this wonderful work of nature, the attire of her head presented such an artificial device, that it seemed she had, the same day, some

fore-knowledge of the coming of him whom her beauty made prisoner, and her cruelty enjoined a most hard and long penance: for she had upon the uppermost part of her head a caul, or coronet of gold, resting upon a wreath or garland of flowers of sundry colours, platted by curious sleight of the fingers within her enamelled hairs, which, covering one part of her shoulders, dispersed themselves also sometime upon her delicate forehead, and sometime waving upon her rosy cheeks, according to the mild breath of the evening wind which gave them moving, disposed themselves with such seemly grace, with increase to the beauty of her that wore them, that who had seen the port and majesty which joined to this rare work, would have judged that love and the three graces had had not other place of harbour but in this piece of wonderful perfection.

At either of her ears hung two fair and rich Orient pearls, which increased also the glee of her golden hairs; besides the large and glistering forehead of this nymph; whereupon was set a border of rich diamonds, founded upon a frame of pure gold, casting such piercing glimmers to the beholders, that it presented rather a rank or order of shining stars, when the element in the heat of the summer is most clear, exposing beams of wonderful brightness, than an attire of a mortal creature. Whereupon attended two sparkling eyes, assisted on either side by an equal symmetry or just proportion, with certain knots and borders of veins of the colour of azure, with a special virtue to draw and mortify any heart made of the hardest metal that ever was, yielding so liberally their fervent beams, that whoso disposed himself to contemplation of these two twinkling stars, was in no less danger to lose the benefit of his sight than, in times past, we read certain philosophers became blind, upon the Mount Olympus, with continual regard of the sun to judge the disposition of the heavens.

Then appeared her delicate nose, answering in proportion the rest of her face, dividing also her two cheeks, of the colour of a fine incarnate, resembling two round apples come already to the fulness of their maturity. Next to the which succeeded her coral mouth, breathing a perfume more precious and sweet than any confection made of the amber musk, or other drug aromatic coming out of Arabia. And if sometime she chanced to disclose and open her lips, resembling in roundness

and colour two cherries in their full ripeness, exceeding also the softness of anything that ever was accounted delicate or tender, there appeared two rows of pearls, of such rare whiteness, that the Orient, I say, complaineth of want of cunning to make comparison with the colour of her teeth.

And so, descending somewhat lower, this Diana discovered a neck whose complexion giveth cause of shame to the whiteness of the glorious lily, and makes blush the pure alabaster: her stomach also, somewhat raised by two round and precious dugs of equal separation, was covered with a brave and soft veil, more tender than the thin lawn, which hindered noway the view of her travailing breasts, panting and drawing a pleasant breath, according to the motion of the affection which governed the inner parts of the thoughts of this earthly goddess; who, besides all this, was assisted with a gift of such natural beauty, bestowing courteous regards upon all men according to their indifferent merit, that the same made her no less worthy to be honoured and served of the greatest princes of the world, than the rarity of her perfection restored her a marvel and wonder to all men: which is a virtue far from the most part of our fair dames, who, glorying in the glee of their beauty, are moved I cannot tell with what opinion of such disdain, with desire to appear more perfect than is necessary, that, in seeking to set a fairer enamel of that which nature hath made sufficiently precious, they do not only impair the credit of renown, by suborned means of imperfection of themselves, but also, by their own folly, deface the glory of that which stirreth up the chiefest cause of affection in men to do them honour and service.

Wherein, as my purpose is not to discover the doings of any in such cases, so I hope this allegation of a truth in covert manner will defend me from the displeasures of such as find themselves infected with the humour of that folly. Wherewith, in preferring my integrity, I wish them all as worthy as they are desirous to wear the badge of glorious beauty. And so to Dom Diego, whom I think you will judge had sufficient cause of astonishment, being so valiantly assailed, without thinking of such an assault, with so strong an army as the beauty, behaviour, and princely shape of this fair imp and very nestcockle of nature.

Aye! I think that the most sparing pilgrim that ever undertook to mortify his body with painful travel in devotion

to any saint, would have renounced his vow, and cast away both scrip and staff, to have done honour to so fair an object as the beauty of this nymph ; and I doubt whether the most assured and staid philosopher of old time would have made any conscience to forsake his profession of contemplation of natural things with judgment of the elements, to have disposed himself and skill to the service of so rare a perfection. I think, also, that if the daughter of Minos had been favoured with semblable beauty, and blessed with equal gifts and grace of this lady, that her Hippolytes would have left the ship and dogs of Diana, to have pursued the quest of so divine a mystery as appeared in all parts of this Genivera *la Blonde ;* who, for her part also, was indifferently amazed and no less astonied with the port and courtlike behaviour of the knight, than he moved to silence with the view of her beauty.

Wherewith, also, casting upon him certain regards at unawares, she began to feel a motion of that wherein she had not been erst experienced, with an alteration in her heart which forced a change of complexion in her face, with a sudden silence for want of audacity to speak—an ordinary custom to such as be stricken with the disease of love, to lose the use of the tongue when it should chiefly ease the grief of the heart, who, not able to support the heavy burden of passions proceeding of that evil, doth impart the greatest charge to the eyes, as to the faithful messengers of the secret conceptions of the mind, which, passioned above his force, and pressed with the alarums of affection, is driven for the most part to force a vent or issue for the humour of his desire by the same means and ministers which first discovered the rage of his fever.

Whereof there seemed already a sympathy or equality between the two younglings, being both indifferently ignorant of the mystery or cause of such sudden transmutation, which also grew to terms of aggravation in them both by a renovation of their greetings and entertainments at their arrival at the castle ; the same serving as fresh baits to increase their desire, having, notwithstanding, chiefest power on behalf of the knight, who, losing at this first meeting the liberty of his thoughts, became, by little and little, so ravished of his senses, and drowned in the poisoned pool of love, that he took no other pleasure than in the conceit of the gracious martyrdom

he endured in the secret imagination of the beauty of his fair Genivera.

Here you may see the knight, who in the morning was the master of himself and in full possession of his senses, is now so transformed into a contrary disposition, that his willing bondage and state of present captivity is not only more pleasant unto him than the benefit of his ancient liberty dear, but also kept him so long from the use of his former freedom that in the end he took no felicity if not in wishing to enjoy the other world: which for the most part are the fruits of this folly, who, sealing the senses of man, doth drive him headlong (with his eyes closed) into the gulf of miserable despair.

And as love proceeds no otherways than of a fond opinion, so the purgatory of such as be afflicted therewith, comes only by a foolish persuasion that they be forsaken or deceived in the thing which they honour so much: whereof the contrary part, if they would be indifferent between their passion and his value, they would not so rashly make more account of the thing which torments them, than of their health, honour and life, exposed all to the service and appetite of her who, disdaining peradventure their endeavour, returns the meed of their merit upon a stranger, and yields the prey to another for the which he hath taken such pain: whereby he takes occasion of absolute despair, delighting in nothing but the peremptory end of his unhappy life.

Whilst supper was making ready, the lady mother dispatched certain of her people to seek the servants of Dom Diego; whereof some had in charge to report his being there to his mother, who, for her part, was no less glad than she had cause, chiefly for that the distress of her son brought him in the end to so good an hostess as her neighbour and only friend of the world. In which meanwhile, the stranger was desired to supply the best place at the table; over against whom was appointed the match that first set his heart on fire. And in place to perform the expectation of his hostess in tasting the sundry delicate meats she had prepared for him, he fed only upon the dishes of love; and contenting himself with the diet of his eyes, who, without either let or jealousy, imparted their nurture to the heart, roved now and then by secret glances and piercing regards to the tender stomach of the fair Genivera; who, for her part, also was no niggard to requite

him with treble usury of familiar glee : which restored such fresh alarums to his late desire, that the alterations he felt in himself made him blush at his own behaviour.

And as, during the time of supper, he was indifferently feasted with delicate broths prepared by the mother and familiar signs sent unto him by the eyes of her daughter, so he felt himself double passioned, both to conster the meaning of such regards, and also to dim the sight of the old lady for discerning the convey of their folly. Wherein, albeit, as well to cast a mist before the eyes of her mother, as to dissemble the desire of his mind, he bestowed his looks inconstantly here and there about all the parts of the table, yet could he not use such sleight in this simple shift but his eyes took always their last farewell upon the place and person of his mistress ; in whom he found so thankful a return with amorous tribute, that in the end he durst not behold her any more, for fear her beauty would bereave him of the benefit and sight of his eyes.

All which were but preparatives to the part he had yet to play ; into the which he began to enter the same night, when, after supper, and the banquet performed, he had given the *bonsoir* to his hostess and her fair daughter, who, for a more show of his welcome (or rather a declaration of her zeal) but chiefly to leave him occasion of further torment, would not depart his chamber till she saw him in bed ; where in place of sleep, and to restore his weary body with the course of natural rest, he began to sigh and build castles in Spain ; preferring in his mind the images of a thousand fancies and follies such as are appointed to appear and torment them as have their brain weakened with vain cogitations.

" Alas ! " saith he, " is it possible that I, which so long have enjoyed the benefit of a pleasant liberty, should thus lightly yield to the first summons and apprehension of a servile thraldom ; which albeit I cannot express in proper terms, yet my mind feeleth an experience and effect of his force ? Is this the desert of my former freedom, or just hire of wanton inclination ? If such hard tribute attend mine ancient quiet, what expectation of other felicity is there in the course of our young years, than, for a short time of flattering delights in liberty, to be rewarded in the end with an interest of treble torments in bondage ? Have I thus long kept war with the enemy of my free privilege, and reserved the maidenhead of

my affection, to fall thus into the danger of a captivity, where I doubt no less whether my offer will be received, than despair to be entreated according to the justice of my merit? Ah, Genivera! God forbid that thy beauty have power to send so many torments and punishments to my yielded heart, as the tree whereupon thou takest thy name hath pricks to annoy them that touch it, and bitter indigestion to such as make a taste of the juice! Ah! paragon, and only praise of beauty! surely the fearful hare which thy dogs tore in pieces afore thy face this evening was not more martyred by the bloody jaws of thy greyhounds, than my heart is tormented and divided into diversity of opinions upon the affection which I bear thee.

"Wherein, alas! as I know not whether thou wilt admit me worthy of thy service, or hast already past a grant of thy love to another more worthy of favour than the loyal Dom Diego, so yet I may be bold to vaunt upon this impossibility, that no man is able to approach the unfeigned sincerity of my heart; determining rather to give place to the sentence of my death than to dismiss the least part of the duty I have vowed to thy beauty: whose outward show promiseth an inward virtue, that I cannot despair to possess in the end the due meed of my loyalty. Till which time I will prey only upon the food of expectation, with assured intent, for my part, not only to abandon all other impressions or desires but such as shall seem to favour the honour and service I have already sworn, but also to endeavour, by extreme diligence, to make myself worthy of the goodwill of the fairest lady that this day is shrouded under the globe or circuit of heaven."

Wherewith, after he had consumed certain hours of raving and raging upon his amorous complot, and that he had sufficiently sweat at the brows with the force and vehemency of his passion, he found the chiefest medicine for moderation of his grief to communicate unto her the points of his good-will, with desire he had, not only to serve her, but also, from henceforth, to accept in good part such sentence as she shall think good to pronounce of his life or death, and to do nor say anything but such as shall be awarded him by the doom of the fair Genivera: who, for her part, also, was not void of passion, nor dispensed from semblable torment; for, offering to perform the ceremonies of the night, she was denied to close

her eyes, and yet knew not the cause that hindered the course of sleep. By which means making a labyrinth of her rich and fair field-bed, she was no less assailed with contrariety of conceits than her languishing servant. Wherefore, finding the burden of affection to exceed the greenness of her years, not yet assisted with any discretion or experience in love, she determined to allow the resolution of the knight, if he imparted the same either by subtle signs or secret conference.

This was the exercise of that night of both the lovers, equal in desire, and yet the one ignorant of the other's grief, wasting indifferently in sighs and wishes, as apprentices of the thing wherein those that begin be always most hot, and such as continue gain skill by long practice ; and yet the best experienced of all are void of resistance against such an evil, and lack government in the convey of so hurtful a case.

The morning had no sooner discovered her glorious beams, and the messenger of the sun summoned the loathsome night to retire, but the weary knight left his restless bed, with intent to take leave of his hostess and challenge the scope of the large fields, to record and entertain his amorous thoughts in returning to his mother's house. Wherein, notwithstanding, he found a stay of his meaning by the honest importunity of the old lady, who, with more entreaty than was needful to so willing a guest, won him easily to determine his tarrying till dinner ; till which time he found a supply of exercise with her company and conference of her daughter, in whom he saw continual cause to aggravate his affection, and double occasion to increase his desire, in such sort as his astonied countenance and broken answers, importing most often the contrary of their demands, showed sufficiently the trouble and war in his mind ; which albeit the subtle Genivera construed according to a truth, yet her simple mother imputed it to an honest shame and want of audacity in the gentleman, for that he had not much haunted the company of ladies.

Wherein as they spent the most part of the morning, without, notwithstanding, that Dom Diego had the heart to discover the least part of his promise of the night, so the hour of dinner summoned them to break their discourse and perform the due to the appetite of nature with such delicate and sumptuous fare as the good lady had provided in declaration of the hearty zeal she bare to her guest ; who, after dinner, failed not in humble sort to be thankful to his hostess, with

assurance that albeit he was not able to requite her courtesy with equal consideration, yet his good-will at all times should be nothing inferior to the greatness of her merit. Wherewith he addressed the rest of his duty to her daughter, whose beauty, as you see, had made so great a wound in his heart that the remembrance remained till the last hour of his life.

And as he kissed her hand, with intent to decipher that which he had imagined all the night, he became so amazed with the impediment he felt in his tongue, with strange diversity in all his senses, that he seemed no less ashamed of his present weakness in that place, than afore he was fully resolved to discharge the resolution and meaning of his heart. Which albeit gave some cause of little astonishment to the young lady, yet she found indifferent occasion of pleasure and pity in his passion ; for that, as the one proceeded by her means, so she felt a motion in conscience to expose the other for the relief of him who suffered for her sake.

Wherefore, with a troubled regard, tempered with sufficient arguments of affection on her behalf, she brake his dumb trance with these words : " I wish, sir," saith she, " that you might find as much pleasure in your passion as the same hath imparted equal grief to others, and that your future absence may pinch you with no less annoy than your present departure leaveth me desirous to enjoy a longer time of your presence."

Which philosophy, not looked for of the knight, did not only dismiss his silence and untie the charm of his tongue, but also reinforced him to an audacity to yield her thanks for the compassion she used to his distress ; with addition that only he was happy above all the world to be partaker of so liberal a wish, but chiefly to hear her in terms of desire touching his presence, which, with his life and all that he had, he bound there, by oath, to be prest at all hours to perform the execution of her commandment.

Whereunto she replied with thanks according to the affection that governed her, with request eftsoons (and that with a reciprocal look and soft sigh) not to forget hereafter the way to the castle of her mother, to whom she assured him the welcomest guest of the world ; and, for her part, she accounted it a felicity to participate in her pleasure, and keep in entire the league of friendship, wherewith, heretofore, both their houses have been blessed from the beginning.

Wherewith time, with the number of assistants witnessing their glee, forced an abridgment of their farewell, contrary, albeit, to both their wills; the one retiring to her chamber with more care and less quiet than afore, and the other, with a thousand hammers in his head, took his way to the house of his mother, to whom he imparted his adventure; his distress being left of his men in a place unknown, his horse overcome with extreme travail; and that which worst was, the approach of night, and his desire to find harbour; when, notwithstanding, he chanced upon the castle of the old lady, of whose courtesy and beauty of her daughter he made a particular discourse, leaving out, notwithstanding, the glee between Genivera and him, with request that it would please her to join with him in some honest means of thankful consideration to them both.

Whereunto he found his mother no less ready in consent, than himself desirous to use expedition in the effect; so that, with her advice, the plot was made to invite them to her house the week following, and that he alone should work the effect, like as he found himself most charged with the debt of their courtesy and desire to requite it. Whereunto he added such diligence, that, upon his letter and humble request, he got the consent of the mother and daughter, which both failed not of their promise at the day appointed.

When Dom Diego (having for the nonce the assistance of all the gentlemen and gentlewomen his neighbours) forgat no point of his endeavour to do them all the honour he could, both in sumptuousness of diet (whereof there was more than sufficient), choice of music and melody of all sorts, masques, mummeries, triumphs, and other offices of humanity; wherein it behoved him chiefly to show a singular dexterity, as well for the discharge of every man's eye and expectation touching a show of his gifts (being nourished and brought up amongst princes), and also for the desire he had to leave no honour unperformed in the company of her who had already the whole possession of his liberty.

I need not describe by piecemeal the apparel of the feast, the diversity and change of their diet, their delicate banquets, nor the sundry sorts of sweet wines. It may suffice that after dinner they descended into a great hall, ready trimmed for the purpose, where the dances began according to the stroke of a sweet and soft music, shrouded

under a veil or canopy of arras in the uppermost part of the hall. There every gentleman took his lady; amongt whom Dom Diego was not forgetful to address him towards his mistress, no less glad of her happy encounter that he content to be so near the cause of his pleasant torment and unsupportable passion of mind; whereof he began, even now, to make some discovery by words of this sort:

"Like as, good madam, I have always thought that music hath imported a secret virtue to force an appearance of joy in the most pining and solitary disposition that is; even so I find mine opinion confirmed by a present experience in myself, who erst languishing in pangs of inward grief, with detestation not only against myself, but also all other things that offered anyway to ease the greatness of mine annoy, do feel now some moderation of my martyrdom, as well by the lamentable note of these records and insensible instruments agreeing with the sorrowful condition of my present distress, as, also, that, by their conformity and means, I find myself near unto her who only hath power to clear the clouds of my mortal evil and restore me to the calm of mine ancient quiet. And as diverse diseases are not cured but by a medicine and object of their first occasion, so, for my part, being contributor to the danger of that extremity, I account you as justly bound to yield me compassion, as your beauty is the chief and undoubted cause of the alteration which I can no longer conceal from you, and which forceth me in these few words to vow unto you (without condition of dissolution) such assurance of my service that only death shall have commission to corrupt the league which I seal here on your behalf, by the faith and life of a knight, to be the only servant, loyal friend, and (if you accept the offer) the lawful husband of the fair Genivera *la Blonde.*"

Who, for her part, felt herself so assailed with the motions of affection, that she could not continue so assured in her countenance but there appeared change of colour, arguing indifferently a contentment of the offer and a pleasant mislike of his request, which rather gave him courage to pursue the points of his purpose, than desist or disclaim the hope of so good a beginning. Wherein, as he forgat not to use the office of a good solicitor for himself all that after-dinner, so his importunity at last brought her to pass a consent, and confirm the bail under these terms:

"I am ignorant, sir," saith she, "in the mystery of your disease, and much less am I privy to the occasion; which both, I hope, will defend me from imputation of blame in withholding the remedy you crave at my hand. Only I cannot but grieve in the evil of him to whom, if the whole company are justly bound to be thankful for the friendship they find, I have cause of double obligation, possessing, by your presence, the only contentment I wish in this world. Neither is your affliction partial on your behalf, considering I am also plunged in pangs of equal effect, finding now (I must confess unto you) that as it is very hard to conceal the passion proceeding of love, so, albeit I had determined yet to dissimulate that which I feel, yet am I forced from that resolution by a suggestion stirring in the secret of my heart, which I cannot term properly otherways than a second inspiration, assailing me with an impression whereof I am indifferently ignorant, both for skill and judgment: notwithstanding, reposing much for myself in your virtue, which moveth me also to a remorse to satisfy in some part the due of your desert, I am content to admit the offer of a loyal friend, till you have obtained of my mother the second point confirming the uttermost of your demand. Till then, content yourself with my just delay, and procure the supply of your desire, with the expedition of your own diligence."

Which last words stirred up such present joy in the passioned knight that, what between the waves of sudden gladness overflowing all his parts, and hope of speedy redress by the consent of her mother, he was scarce able to pronounce a simple thanks. Albeit, kissing her white and delicate hand, in witness of the singular pleasure he felt in the breath of her words, he told her, that as her beauty and virtue deserved honour of the greatest prince in Spain, so, for his part, he only might glory in the service of the most fair, courteous, and honest lady that ever was bred on that side the Mounts. Wherewith he was driven to cut off his further discourse, by the approach of the messenger which was sent from the two lady mothers to will them to come to supper.

Where, if there were any want of curious device at dinner, it was supplied with a double excess at this supper, being served with such change and choice of strange diet, that, if it be not sin to compare the abuses mortal with divine mysteries, I think Jupiter and the other gods were not so

plentifully entreated upon the Mount Pelion, celebrating the marriage of the fair Thetis. Albeit, the end of the banquet concluded with a resolution to renew the exercise of after dinner, upon a fair green, environed with divers borders and odoriferous herbs and imps of the earth, pavised above by artificial sleight with certain laurel branches and buds of hawthorn, to defend them from the parching heat of the sun ; where they had also, to assist their pleasant recreations, the most temperate season of the day at the declining of the sun, the pleasant huishing of a clear stream descending from the top of a mountain, the chirping harmony of the fielden birds (assembled as it were only to increase their solace), and also the soft and sweet accord of the green boughs or young sprays moving at the whistle of the mild zephyr.

Where, as they divided themselves into diverse change of pastimes ; some to weave garlands of flowers for their servants, some to run and leap or expose their exploits of activity for the honour of his mistress, and others to try the mastery of main force by casting the sledge or heavy bar ; so, amongst them all, there was one Dom Roderico, a near neighbour and most familiar to the amorous Diego, who, perceiving by the secret messengers of the eye which passed between him and his mistress by stealth, to what saint he would gladly offer his candle, and how desirous she was to admit his devotion, furthered the intents of them both so far forth that he took by the hand a young gentlewoman, sitting next to the fair Genivera, to begin a new dance. Whereunto as she was nothing unwilling, so Dom Diego took courage to address himself to his mistress, whose example the whole troop of nobility followed with indifferent contentation.

And for the more honour of the dance, Seigneur Roderico, who was the first in the round, gave charge of silence to the musicians, having conferred afore with his gentlewoman to sing some solemn note upon the subject of the two amorous : wherein she performed so indifferently the praise and passion of them both, that a man would have judged she had entered into the heart of Dom Diego, and been specially instructed of the fair Genivera ; who, seeing herself touched at the quick, and pinched without laughing in the hearing of so many, but chiefly exalted to the skies in the presence of him who took no less pleasure in her praises than if he had been presented with the Seigniory of all Aragon—could not so

cunningly dissemble her contentment but the alteration of her mind appeared in the often change of complexion in her face; which, as it increased the crystal dye and excellency of her beauty, so Dom Diego, construing that passion to his commodity, gave judgment of the assurance of her good-will.

Whereof, for a further proof, he wrung her tender fingers, and with a smiling regard, asking her her opinion of the song, wished that her servant might live to see the accomplishment of such a prophecy; protesting, withal, that in his life he had not heard music of more delight. "For the which," saith he, "I acknowledge a debt to the gentlewoman that so aptly hath discovered your good-will towards me, and vowed so frankly on your behalf my loyal service, which I will not forget to confirm in all that I may, even until the last drop of my blood."

Whereunto Genivera replied with a double usury of humble thanks; with request that he repose undoubted credit in the mystery of the song, which, as it had rightly deciphered the determination of her mind, and unfolded that which she reserved only as secret in herself; so she would not, for her part, forget to perform the effect, when convenient time, with her mother's consent, would admit the lawful consummation.

Upon which last words, attend such friendly glances and wanton regards of the eye, with a counterchange of semblable glee on his part, that the two lady widows did not only note their affections, but also give judgment of the conclusion and unity of their minds, with resolution, for their parts, to confirm the bargain with the assistance of time, using as then but only a simple conference, deferring the final effect by reason of the tender years and green youth of both the lovers, whom, if the discretion of the mothers at that instant had conjoined by the oath of marriage, they had prevented the malice of an inconstant Fortune, who in all delays forgets not to play the ordinary rôlet of her natural mobility; whereof she exposed a manifest effect in the persons of these two ancient widows, one having lost her son for twenty or twenty-two months (without hope eftsoons to recover his presence) by a cruelty and rash conceit of the daughter of the other, who (without the special providence of God) had given such a false bound to her honour, that the simple remembrance was sufficient to dispatch the old years of her mother, with an untimely summons to descend to her fatal grave.

And now, during this amorous practice between these two prentices in love, whose affection, growing to a ferventness with an indifferent desire in them both, presented arguments of equal alteration in the persons of the one and the other; for Dom Diego, retiring little and little from the lively hue of his former complexion, seemed transformed in a moment, neither did he allow any pleasure but that which he possessed by the presence of his Genivera; who also for her part judged the whole felicity of the earth to consist in the person of her servant, whom she accounted the only pattern for perfection of all the gentlemen of his time. Neither did he let slip any week wherein he went not to do his duty to his mistress three or four times; in whom he found a return of his courtesy, with such virtuous and honest consideration as was convenient in a maid careful of the guard of her honour.

Wherein, albeit her mother, reposing indifferent credit in the virtue of them both, gave leave to her daughter to keep him company; yet (as Aristotle affirmeth) honesty doth not brook long dalliance or wanton chat in chaste maids with the first that accosteth them with conference in corners, with any but such as by consent of the Church have got the power and possession of their body, and is, or ought to be, the one half or moiety of their mind: which albeit was the intent and desire of these two lovers, yet the simplicity of their friends, deferring the effect, wrought not only a breach of the bargain, but also stirred up in her an humour of mortal spite against the sincerity of her loyal servant, who endured the revenge of her unjust anger, under a punishment of a most sharp and long penance in deserts unhabitable and unknown.

For in the heat of this reciprocal love between these younglings, it chanced that a marvellous fair and goodly gentlewoman, daughter of a great lord of the country, called Ferrando della Serra, using familiarly the company of Genivera, became by that means extremely in love with Dom Diego, assaying, by public and private means, to impart unto him what power and authority she would willingly give him over her heart, if for his part he would requite the sincerity of her love with semblable honour and affection. Wherein, experiencing the benefit of all honest means seeming anyway to favour theeffect of her desire, she considered at last, that, above all other exercises, the knight took greatest pleasure

in hawks. Wherefore, under colour to make a breach into his favour with assisting the disposition of his delight, she sent him one day a tassel-gentle, as the chiefest jewel she had to present him withal, except the offer of her own good-will. Wherein Dom Diego, albeit he was wholly possessed by another, and with the loss of his liberty had also so departed with his judgment that he could not discern the intent and honest zeal of the gentlewoman, yet he accepted her present, and returned the messenger with such thanks as appertained.

In the receiving of this hawk appeared absolute shows of the evil fortune of the poor Diego, which immediately failed not to thunder upon him without compassion ; for as he went often to visit his mistress, so he forgat not continually to carry this hawk upon his fist, boasting so far upon the goodness of the bird, that he chanced in her presence to say that it was one of the things in the world he held most dear.

Surely these words were sifted more nearly than there was cause, and construed to other end than he meant them ; seeing that certain days after, in his absence, devising upon his sundry virtues, some commended his honest and courteous behaviour, some gave praise to his valiantness and dexterity in arms, some exalted in him the sundry gifts of nature, and, passing further, he was generally preferred of all the company for his sincerity and constant dealing in matters of love ; saving of one Gratiano, who, rather envying the virtue of the knight by malice than able to deface the least of his gifts by reason, joined with the rest in commendation of his personage, activity, and other dowries of nature ; " but for his faith, or care of promise where loyalty should most appear, I account him," saith he, "so apt to dissemble and inconstant by nature, that he useth no difference of persons in grounding his affections, making no conscience to seem to languish mortally where he meaneth nothing less than firm constancy."

Which toucheth Genivera so near that she could not give place any longer to the sinister babble of Gratiano, desiring him to use other terms touching the honesty of Dom Diego : " for," saith she, " I am of opinion that he will rather pass under the sentence of any death, than forfeit the least point of his promise passed already under the seal of his faith to a gentlewoman of this country : besides, his love, I know, is so sincere and upright that I dare pawn my life on the behalf of the assurance."

" There is the mist that dimmeth your eyes," saith this cankered enemy of Diego, " for, under the veil of a perjured loyalty, he abuseth the simplicity of honest ladies : whereof I need not go far for a proof, nor you doubt much of the mystery, if you compare the circumstance of his former profession towards you with the present league of friendship between him and the daughter of Dom Ferrando della Serra, confirmed already by the gift of a tassel-gentle, which, for her sake, he esteemeth above all the things in the world."

Which last allegation, restoring a remembrance of the words pronounced not long ago by the knight touching the dear account he made of his hawk, began to breed a suspicion of his constancy, and an assured credit in the information of the unhappy Gratiano : wherein, swelling immediately with her unjust choler, incensed by a simple and cold jealousy, she was forced to abandon the place and retire into her chamber ; where she gave such scope to her sinister conceit that she was upon terms many times to use force against herself : whereunto she had added present dispatch, if a hope to procure in time the revenge of the wrong which she persuaded to have received of her Diego had not staid the execution.

Albeit she could not so govern her malicious disposition but the deadly hate conceived in this moment against the innocent gentleman did not only supplant both stock and root of ancient zeal on her part, but also grew to such mortality in her venomous stomach, that she seemed not to delight so much in the use of her own life as in desire to take pleasure in the remembrance of the death of him, who, no less innocent in the cause than ignorant of the grudge, came the next morning (as he was wont) to see her, having upon his fist (by evil fortune) the bird which bred first this mortal jealousy.

And as he sat devising with her mother, finding a want of the accustomed company of his mistress, he asked where she was. Whereunto he was answered by one of her women, that, as soon as she saw him enter the house, she took her chamber. All which he dissimulated by his wisdom, imagining the same to proceed of some wanton fancy, or coy conceit, whereunto the most part of women are commonly incident, so that, when he saw his time, he took leave of her mother and departed, meeting by chance as he went down the stairs of the hall one of the *chambrières* or gentlewomen of Genivera,

whom he requested to kiss the hand of his mistress on his behalf : which she promised to perform, hoping to do a thing no less acceptable to her mistress than to gain thanks of him on whose behalf she presented the courtesy.

Albeit, as it is to be thought that Genivera enjoyed little quiet and less contentment in this meanwhile, solicited I cannot tell by what desire to defy wholly the remembrance of Diego : wherein she was rather the furthered by an information that he bare still the tassel of his fist : which she judged to be done only in respite of her. So, when her woman offered to present the embassage of the knight, she fell into such terms of frenzy that the simple bruit or name of Dom Diego stirred up such heinous alterations within her, that to her former wrath was added a present woodness ; in such sort, that she seemed for the time to labour indifferently between the extreme pangs of death and use of longer life. Albeit, restored at last by the great diligence of her woman, she could not so wholly dismiss her fury but she imparted the passion of her anger to her eyes ; who, after they had somewhat eased her inward grief by a number of dolorous tears, put her eftsoons in the possession of her former speech, which she witnessed in these exclamations :

" Ah ! traitor and disloyal knight ! unworthy everyway to participate with the breath of the common air, and no less meritorious of the honour or bare title of knighthood, hath the constant and honest love I have borne thee deserved this unhonest recompense ? Is it a virtue to pretend loyalty under a masked visorn of detestable deceit ? If these be the fruits of thy faith, purified through so many oaths, what expectation of assurance is there in the promise of any man ? Is it I that must feel the sting of thy infection ? What cause have I given thee to imagine the spoil of mine honour, and impart the prey to another unworthy everyway of just comparison to me ; if not in loving thee more than was convenient to thy inconstant and dissembling disposition, I have embased mine honour to advance thy renown ?

" How couldest thou without blushing attempt the offer of my good-will, having thy conscience poisoned with so many spots of abominable treason ? How darest thou present me the *baise les mains* by the mouth of a messenger, seeing thy whole body is already vowed to the service of another ? No ! no ! seeing God hath revealed thee unto me afore thy

villainy put effect to the ruin of mine honour, I doubt not only to defend me hereafter from the force of thy deceitful charms, but also swear unto thee by the eternal majesty of the Highest, that, albeit force makes me the treasuress of thy wickedness, yet assure thyself from henceforth at my hands of such favour as thou mayst expect of the most mortal enemy thou hast in the world."

Wherewith, to give the last farewell to the poor Diego, she writ immediately certain lines and delivered them sealed to her page, with commission that the next day he should meet the knight on the way coming hither and deliver the letter, with instruction besides, that afore he came to the house, he should read the contents and perform the effect. Whereof the page (being made to the string) failed not of any point: for the next day he met Dom Diego a quarter of a league from the house, presenting him the letter with his commission by mouth; who, kissing the paper of his mistress in honour of her that sent it, opened the packet and found that which followeth:

"Albeit the continual complaint of my grief imports no dispense of my dolour, yet, in exclaiming against the wrong thou hast done me, I shall so decipher thy villainy that the whole world shall find cause, not only to proclaim open shame upon thee, but also (by my misfortune) beware of the infections of thy detestable treason. Whereunto if I have added more credit than there was cause on thy side, the remembrance of that which is past (preferring a continual view of thy perjured troth) is to defend me hereafter from the offer of semblable peril. Neither will I live henceforth in fear of future evil, or stand in awe eftsoons to be infected by thee, for that I have not only banished the remembrance of Diego out of every corner of my mind, but also am of intent to perform such vengeance and punishment of myself, that if I feel any vein, member, or other part in me, bent never so little to favour thee or sue for grace on thy behalf, to use no less cruelty in tearing the same from the rest than thy disloyalty hath stirred up such just cause of unseemly tyranny in me. And for thy part, O perjured knight! since it is thy only trade to beat every bush where thou thinkest to be either bird or nest, go pitch thy nets where thou art sure of prey, and bait thy hooks with terms of deceit to entrap her,

whose late present is of more force with thee than the honest and chaste love which virtue began in us both ! For, seeing a bird hath made thee more light than the wind that supports her in the air, God forbid that Genivera either admit thy excuses or allow thy justification, and much less wish thee other good, than to see thee torn in pieces with the most extreme torments that ever martyred any traitor : which is the last favour thou hast to hope for of me, who liveth not but to work thee spite above any enemy thou hast in the world.

GENIVERA LA BLONDE."

He had no sooner read this sorrowful news but lifting his eyes to heaven he called God to witness of his innocency ; Who only being privy to the integrity of his mind, could also justify his loyal meaning towards her who unjustly abused the sincere virtue of his immovable affection. And as he meant there to prefer some discourse in his purgation, the page, who was not so amply instructed of his mistress as mortal enemy to Dom Diego, staid the intent of his meaning by the report of that which he had in charge by mouth, saying that he could do no greater pleasure to Genivera than to shun all places of her repair ; " seeing," saith he, " that as the friendship you have vowed to the daughter of the Lord Serra hath discovered your untruth towards her, so she hath given judgment against your virtue, for feeding two simple gentlewomen indifferently with the food of one uncertain hope."

Wherewith he departed, leaving the knight in less care than afore, for that, comparing her grudge with the cause, he thought the small occasion, founded also upon an untruth, would in short time take away the force of her choler. Albeit he could not so wholly dismiss the remembrance of her displeasure, nor govern his own passion, but returning to his castle above an ordinary pace went to his chamber, where, pulling the poor hawk from the perch, committed her presently to a thousand morsels, and cursing her that sent her, with his own folly in receiving so vile a thing (enchanted as he thought by some fury or magical charm), determined immediately to present his mistress with the sacrifice of the occasion of her unjust anger, with intent to perform no less of his own body, if she would not give place to her displeasure upon his honest purgation.

Which, with the dead hawk, he sent by a trusty servant of his, debated at large in a letter ; wherein, after a number of just reasons to confute her unjust objections, touching lightly her rash judgment in giving sentence of his untruth without hearing his justification, he preferred certain humble means for moderation of her displeasure, unless she reposed felicity to see him consumed in the martyrdom of a pining life, or delighted in the news of his present death ; with other instructions which he gave the messenger, but chiefly to note the countenance of his mistress and make faithful report of every point of her answer. Wherewith the messenger posteth to Genivera, to whom with all humility he presented the charge of his commission.

Albeit, the passion of her fretting anger denied her patience to read the letter, and much less would give her leave to accept the present, the unfeigned witness of the contrary of that which she so lightly believed ; but she charged the messenger upon great pain to return the trumperies he had brought, and say unto his master, that she knew too well his whistle to come at his call, and, being lately burned, she would take heed eftsoons to fall into the fire. Wherewith albeit the servant went about to prefer the excuse of his master, yet the disdainful lady, choking his honest intent, forced him to unwilling silence, with charge to impart her resolution to his master ; "whom," saith she, "if I loved erst entirely, I hate now with a malice more than mortal."

Wherewith she flung out of the presence of the messenger, leaving him no less amazed at her cruelty than doubtful to return to his unfortunate master, whom he knew would scarcely be kept from the danger of despair in hearing the sorrowful summons of his mistress. Albeit, seeing he had professed to make a faithful report, he returned, not forgetting to repeat every point of that which she had given him in charge; and withal restored the letter and dead present unto the silly Diego, who at the same instant had given like end to his evil and life, if his man had not withstanded the execution of his murdering hands. Albeit he could not give such impediment to the fury of his passion, but that it kept him occupied with hideous groans and doleful regards the most part of the afternoon, till at last he qualified the extremity of the fury in complaining to himself in this sort :

"Alas," saith he, "what judgment of fortune is this, that being at the point to reap the fruits of the contentment I wish in the world, and feed of the only felicity I have in this life, to be presented with an extremity of more desperation than ever happened to any that bear the name of unfortunate? If such iniquity bear a sway in paying the due hire of the honest service of men, what hope hereafter may sustain the life of faithful lovers? What expectation have they in the end of their travail, when a jealous envy hath power not only to take the prey out of their hands, but also impart the fruit of their hope to another not worthy anyway to participate with so glorious a merit? Ah! Genivera, if thy disdainful anger would give thee leave to make a view of my innocency, consider indifferently the circumstance of my former love, with imagination what assurance I have hereafter vowed on thy behalf, so long as my body bears life in this earthly corruption, I know thou wouldest repeal the sentence of thy former judgment, correct the sinister instinct that stirred up the humour of thy cruelty, and wipe away at last the tears of my undeserved sorrow with a frank offer of that which I have deserved by justice.

"Ah! vain hope, which hitherto hast flattered me with pills of joyful digestion, leaving me in the end to the mercy of a miserable despair! Is it I that must feel the operation of thy poison and liquor of bitter taste? It had been better for me to have been repulsed in the beginning, than, after a pleasant proof of reciprocal love, to be refused and lose the earnest of my desire, for so small an occasion that the only remembrance makes me blush at the simplicity of the cause. Albeit, fortune shall not altogether triumph over me; for so long as I live, so long will I keep my vows to the fair Genivera, and preserve my life only to witness the constant force of my love: which albeit I cannot perform without an extreme torment in scorching flames of continual passion, yet the remembrance of my duty to her to whom I offer this devotion of a burning sacrifice of myself, will qualify in some part the heat of my scalding grief."

Wherewith he retired into such sighs and signs of lamentable dolour, showing him indifferently plunged between the alarums of death and pangs of frenzy, that his man was at point to run for the old lady, to come and bless her son with her last farewell. Albeit, restoring his trance by his own

diligence, he began (so far as he durst) to reprehend the weakness of his mind, for that he seemed so careless of himself as to offer his life at the summons of a foolish girl; "who," saith he, "useth this cruel policy, peradventure, to make a trial of your constancy; neither ought you to do such wrong to your virtue, and much less keep war with extremities; but if you be resolved to love her, you must also determine to pursue her by other means, and giving a little place to the malice of Fortune, attend the benefit of a better time, who is never unthankful to them that suffer her with patience, and who also hath power to mollify for you this diamantine heart of your mistress, albeit it be tempered with the metal and blood of the most furious and savage beasts that ever bred in the deserts of Lybia."

Dom Diego did not only allow the admonition of this man, but also felt cause of comfort in his advice, with intent to persist in pursuit of the good-will of his mistress, to whom he preferred sundry letters, embassages by mouth, and other excuses, wherein he gained as much as in the first; for that the more he courted her with honest importunities, the greater grew her unjust displeasure, in such sort, that in the end she threatened the messenger with severe punishment if he continued any longer the quest of his master's folly: "for," saith she, "these hands shall rather give end to my life by a willing force against myself, than my heart consent to be thankful in any sort to him, whom I hate no less than the sting of a venomous serpent."

Which as it brought a fresh supply of dolour to the languishing Diego, trying to the uttermost the virtue of his patience, so, considering the little gain he should get in attending that which his destinies had determined against him, and seeing withal he was void of power to withdraw his affection, determined to repose in the last refuge of all miserable creatures, I mean to give end to his sorrows by death. Wherein, abhorring notwithstanding to defile his own hands with the blood of himself, he resolved to attend his fatal doom in performing the rest of his pining days in some desert or solitary soil, not inhabited but by the savage society of wild beasts. Whereunto he added such expedition, that the next day he caused to be made secretly two habits or attires of pilgrims for himself and one man which he meant to take with him, with other necessaries meet to furnish such a voyage.

The same night also he writ at large to his cruel Genivera, delivering the letter sealed in most sure manner to one of his officers; to whom he would not impart the mystery, but colouring his pilgrim's voyage with a journey he said he had to make to one of his friends, willed him to communicate no less to his mother, and that within twenty days they should expect his return. "For the rest," saith he, "I enjoin thee upon the duty thou owest me to deliver this letter the fourth day after my departure to the Lady Genivera *la Blonde*, who, if she seem disdainful, mark only with what countenance she refuseth it."

Wherewith he dismissed him and called the other, which, as you have heard, performed always the message between him and his mistress, whom only he made privy to his device and partaker of his cruel intent; which seemed so strange in the opinion of his man, that, what for the foulness of the fact, and special care he had of the well-being of his master, he declared frankly his advice in this sort:

"Is it not sufficient, sir," saith he, "that you give yourself in prey to the cruelty of your mistress, but also to increase her glory in suffering her cruelty to vanquish your virtue? Are you so ignorant in the malice of women, that you cannot discern the delight they take to passion their poor servants, triumphing chiefly in the despair of such as they have unhappily made thrall to their beauty? You ought to eschew the misery of that inconvenience by the authority of the wise men in old time, who found such just cause of hate against that sex that they doubted not to term them the common ruin of men. Wherein what other thing moved the Greek poet to pronounce his opinion in few words upon the state of women, but that he knew the felicity of man to be greater in shunning the acquaintance of that fury than in embracing the society of so peremptory an evil; 'seeing,' saith he, 'they differ nothing in disposition from the serpent, who, being delivered from the violence of the frost and preserved from present peril of death by the husbandman, did yield him for recompense a mortal terror with his venomous hissing, and infected his whole house with a stinking vapour.'

"Oh! how happy is he that is the master of his affections, and enjoying the benefit of a pleasant liberty, hath the gift to shun this sweet evil, which, so far as I see, is the cause of

your present despair! Besides, sir, why should not you make an assay to vanquish these suggestions of vanity; seeing that, as he that can master himself may easily make him lord over many things, so, as the orator affirmeth, the most perfect victory is to make a conquest of ourselves? Why should you determine so great an enterprise with the assistance of so slender advice, seeing that upon rash resolutions attend ordinary rebukes, and he that performs his affairs in haste, repents commonly at leisure; neither doth that expedition show good success whose end is not compared with the beginning and guided wholly by the government of reason and virtue? For as upon virtuous enterprises attends a fame of honour and renown, so the reward of wicked devices is infamy and sometime shameful death. And for your part, sir, let your ancient wisdom encounter this feminine misfortune, in making as little account of your rebel mistress, as she is most unworthy to enjoy the least favour of your nobility, which deserveth a more honest consideration than a farewell of such tyrannous disposition."

Wherewith beholding some arguments of anger in the face of his master, whom he feared to incense to the uttermost, he knit up with this resolution: "Seeing," saith he, "you are determined in your mishap, I beseech you accept my service to accompany your fatal guide, to the end I may participate with you in your fortune, till the heavens, ceasing to wreak their malice upon you, do seem also contented to dismiss the cruelties of your destinies." Wherein, as he performed the sum of his master's expectation—who desired only the company of his man in the voyage of his misery—so, after certain thanks for his good-will, he told him that all their furniture was ready, and that there rested nothing but to depart, which they agreed to perform in the first hour after midnight.

Whereunto also the execution followed accordingly; for between twelve and one of the clock in the night, our amorous hermit with his man stealeth secretly out of his castle, taking the first path which his fortune did appoint him, guided only by the light of the moon, without interruption or noise of other creatures than the chirping bruit of the little crickets, solacing themselves in their kind within the crevices of the earth. And wandering thus by unknown ways the later remainder of the fearful night, he saw appear, in the discovery

of the morning, when Aurora advanced her flag of white and red, the morning star, which some poets call the candle that lights the goddess of love from the bed of her secret lover. When lo! the solace of the morning, resembling his ancient delight when he enjoyed the presence of his mistress, presented a fresh alarum of sorrow, in recording eftsoons his unhappy change of state.

"Wherein alas!" saith he, "have I deserved this plague, that denieth me participation in the pleasure and contentment of others, who, after they have slept the course of the night upon the pleasant thought of their delight, do awake with the heavenly harmony and charm of little birds, with assurance to enjoy the effect of that which a shadow or delightful vision of the spirit presented them in the night, sleeping in so great contentment; where I (unhappy that I am!), most cruelly attended upon with a contrary destiny, and in place to enjoy a simple benefit or privilege of that which all others have in common, am forced to wander when all creatures are admitted to rest, having only the air of deserts and lawns uninhabitable to record the echo of my sorrows, and the fellowship of wild beasts to assist the tunes of my complaints?

"Ah, Venus! whose star heretofore hath only guided me, and whose beams of long have taken root in my heart! What cause have I to complain of thy injustice, which yields me falsehood for faith and torment for true constancy of mind? If this be the hire of loyalty, why bearest thou the title of just? The penance I endure dischargeth thee of the name of merciful, or if thou deal so severely with thy true servants, why keepest thou the course amongst the orient planets of the heaven? Albeit if I abuse thy honour in blaspheming the majesty of thy godhead, I sue for no favour, seeing I feel already the full weight of thy heavy hand; neither hast thou any punishment in store whereof I taste not the force in this my unworthy affliction; which, seeing it proceeds by the influence of the star which governeth me, dispatch at once the messenger of thy determination, to the end that, by my death, my distress may receive end, and my cruel mistress perform her glorious triumph in the victory of my pining life."

His complaints could not so stay the swift course of time, but ere he was ware, the height of the sun showed the declining of the day; which moved him to increase his pace, leaving

the common ways to follow the paths least acquainted with travel. Wherein they continued without intermission till the closing of the evening, when the weariness of their horses forced them to descend and take harbour within a little village, far from the ordinary way ; from whence, after some little relief to their horses, and less rest to themselves, they departed, wandering in that sort by the space of three or four days and nights ; the end whereof brought them at last to the foot of a large mountain, inhabited only with savage beasts and creatures unreasonable, discovering round about a plot or soil of pleasant prospect and most proper to shroud the solitary life of the wandering knight.

For if he delighted in the shade, he had there the benefit of a number of pleasant trees which nature seemed to lend him as a special solace in that wilderness ; when his sorrow desired the use of a more open prospect, the plain forests and chases, with their whole herds of deer of all sorts, offered to give him scope to record his grief ; and, for change of recreation, he might view there the hideous and high rocks, whose steepness and craggy situation albeit moved a terror to the beholders, yet were they not without cause of great delight, by reason of the pleasant green, garnished with the tapestry of diverse flowers, spreading themselves all along the height of the said mounts.

But that which moved most his affection to that place was a marvellous fair and roomy cave, environed on all sides with beech, cypress, pineapple, and cedar trees, with other branches yielding fruits of diverse kinds ; right afore the mouth or opening of the which, tending to the valley, appeared a number of pleasant grafts, whose roots, receiving moisture by a clear stream passing with soft noise all along the door of the cave, gave such bountiful nurture to the twigs and tender branches, that the only tops bowed down and dipped themselves as upon duty in a fountain of wonderful clearness, feeding continually the said stream : all which seemed to offer such solace to the solitary intent of Diego, that, without further advice, he determined to perform there the penance he went to do, and to convert that house builded by nature to the monastery of his profession ; wherein he meant to end the voyage of his devotions, commanding his man to alight, who, unsaddling their horses, gave them the key of the wild forests, whereof hitherto they heard no news.

Touching their saddles, with the harness and other furniture of their horses, they bestowed within a little cell or corner in their cave, where, also, leaving their ordinary apparel, they put on their habits of pilgrims. There his man made provision according to the condition of their state and necessity of the place, digging for this first endeavour certain sods and lumps of clay, wherewith he entrenched and rampired their fielden shop, to defend them against the fury of wild beasts, who otherways might oppress them in the night. He made, also, two beds or little couches of soft moss, with a tester and sides of wood, which he hewed in no less fine proportion than if the skill of the carpenter had assisted the work.

They had no other relief or food for long time than of the fruit which the wild trees did yield them ; unless sometime, for a change of diet, they were glad to feed of raw roots, which they digged out of the entrails of the earth, until extreme hunger preferred a means to supply their thin fare—which was that his man made a crossbow, with the which they killed oftentimes the hare and cony feeding at relief. Sometime they beguiled the wild goat in the mountains, and were often the bane of a greater beast in the forest, whose blood they pressed between two pieces of wood, made for the nonce, dividing them into morsels, which they roasted with the heat of the sun, and so furnished in sober manner their lean table, digesting their rude and unwholesome diet with a cup of cold water, whereof they had no less plenty with no more charges, than when they commanded over whole cellars of delicate wine in the palaces of Dom Diego ; who increased the dwell of his present misery with tears of continual complaint, inveighing against the malice of his fortune.

Wherein he used as a common exercise to walk all alone in the most dangerous places of the deserts, entertaining his solitary thoughts, or rather of intent to offer himself a prey to the jaws of some lion, or tiger, or merciless bear descending from the mountains. But the servant, doubting the resolution of his master, prevented the effect of desperation with his continual presence, exclaiming (as far as he durst) against such vanities and acts of frenzy.

Wherein, if by chance he let escape any word reprehending the cruelty or wrong done unto him by his mistress, it was a pastime to see the alteration of Diego, storming against the

presumptuous audacity in his man, in such sort, as continuing eftsoons to accuse her discourtesy, he would not stick to threaten him so far that, if it were not for the respect of the loyalty he had heretofore found in him, he would make him feel how near it touched him at the heart to hear with patience any blasphemy against her, who had no less right to punish him in this sort, than he reason to endure the penance for her sake without cause of just complaint against her severity.

Wherein as he showed an undoubted experience of the contagious disposition of love; for that such as he infected with the corruption of that air, take no pleasure but to gull and glut their thirst with the broth of that pestiferous poison; so if he had rightly measured his own merit with the cause of his unjust torment, using withal the advice of reason, he had not seemed so simple in his own blindness nor been so soon abused by the folly of a foolish girl. His man, doubting any further to attempt him with persuasions, for fear to procure the uttermost of his displeasure, was forced to an unwilling patience, grieving, notwithstanding, on the behalf of the misfortune of his master, who with his evil diet and worse lodging, quarrelling both two with his former order of bringing up, was become so pale and hideous of regard, that he rather resembled the dried bark of a withered tree than the shape of a man bearing life.

Besides, the course of continual tears, and scorching sighs derived from the bottom of his stomach, had so drained the conduits and veins, feeding the parts of his body with natural moisture, that his eyes sunk into his head, his beard forked and grown out of order, the hairs of his head staring like a forlorn man or one loathing the use of longer life, his skin and face full of furrows and wrinkles, proceeding of fretting thought, argued him rather a wild man, born and bred up all the days of his life in the wilderness, than the valiant Diego whose fame exceeded erst the whole compass and circuit of Spain.

But here let us leave our amorous hermit, full of passions in his simple cloister or cave under the earth, and see what followed the delivery of his letters to his cruel Genivera; to whom the servant, the fourth day after his departure according to his charge, presented the letters not without a great show of duty and reverence; who, notwithstanding, as soon as she perceived by the direction from whence they

came, forgat not to retire into her ancient disdain, and casting, in great anger, the letters upon the ground, vouchsafed not once to give leave to the messenger to declare the rest of his embassage.

Wherewith her mother, somewhat reprehending the incivility of her daughter, demanded to see the packet ; " for," saith she, " I am persuaded of the honesty of Diego, neither do I doubt any deceit in his virtue : nor you, daughter, for your part, ought to seem so curious to touch them, seeing that if they import any poison, your beauty only is to be blamed, which was the first bait that infected the knight. And if he put you in remembrance of your rigour, I see no wrong he doth you, considering the greatness of his desert, and the slender care you have of his due consideration."

In which meantime a page took up the letters and gave them to the old lady who found his complaint in such or semblable terms :

" Seeing, good madam, mine innocence is denied to work the effect of her virtue, and just excuses confirmed with the authority of equity and reason are altogether void of force to make a breach into your heart—so hardened against me with unjust disdain that the simple remembrance of my name is no less hateful to you than the offer of any torment, what tyranny soever it import—I find the next acceptable service I can do you is (in mortifying wholly the cause of your displeasure and with my punishment to yield you contentment) to put such distance between us, that neither you nor any other shall know the place of mine abode, and much less the pit of fatal repose wherein I intend to couch my corrupt bones. Wherein, albeit my continual passion, proceeding of the view of your discourtesy, hath bred such a general debility through all the veins and places of force within me, that I feel myself already fallen into the hands of the dreadful messenger, so, afore the effect or execution of the extreme hour, I am thus bold hereby (with the true touchstone or witness of mine innocence) to put you in remembrance of your unnatural rigour.

" Not for that I mean to accuse you to the hire of your desert, but that the world (being privy to my case) may be the indifferent judge between my integrity and your cruelty, my loyal affection, and the wrong you do to the reward of

my service; assuring myself, notwithstanding, that the report of my death will bring a remorse to your conscience, with a compassion (albeit too late), seeing the same shall be the equal balance to poise my sincere and constant intent with your credulous and rash judgment, in admitting for truth the false suggestion of such as envied the virtue of our honest love, with a suborned information of a friendship between me and the daughter of the Lord Serra. If you will make it, good madam, unlawful for a gentleman, traded in the disciplines of civility, to receive the presents of a lady or gentlewoman equal in degree or honour to himself, wherein will you to consist the points of humanity? How can we glory or seem meritorious of the title of nobility, if it be an offence to be thankful to such as do homage to our honour with the offer of any courtesy? Wherein, notwithstanding, I was so curious to offend you, that the only respect or fear of your displeasure, forcing me to abuse the goodness of mine own inclination, made me return the offer of her friendship with a simple *gramercy*.

"And for your part, if your hate hath taken such root against me, and yourself so resolved to do wrong to the sacred pity expected in all women, and shrouded commonly under the veil of such beauty as nature hath painted in your face, that neither the sacrifice which I have made of the cause of your unjust disdain, my languishing penance, nor lawful excuses, have power to persuade you to the contrary of your sinister imagination, I see no other choice than to yield to the partial sentence of your judgment, which, as an enemy to the equity of my cause, favoureth wholly the injustice of your conceit. Wherein, seeing the spots of your mortal displeasure cannot be wiped away but by the blood of my life, which also I am yet to perform, so long as my soul doth keep her hold by the mortal thread and frail fillet of my body, finding this one thing to increase the misery of my death (passing as the breath of a pleasant sigh which shall have power to dismiss my soul under the summons of a soft and shortpang), that mine innocency will always live to accuse you as a cruel murderess of your most constant and loyal servant,

DOM DIEGO."

The tragical contents of this letter struck such sudden dolour into the mind of the old lady that she seemed to

participate with the affliction of the poor forestine hermit. Albeit, dissimulating her passion afore her household servants, she retired into her chamber with her daughter only, whom she failed not to rebuke in sharp sort for her foolish cruelty, as the only cause of the loss of so worthy a knight as Seigneur Diego ; whose letter, albeit she deciphered unto her word by word, proffering withal sundry importunities for mediation and grace on his behalf, yet seemed she as weak to move the hard heart of her daughter, as the mild zephyr, breathing from the western shore, is able to shake the monstrous rocks builded in the belly of the sea, and much less the passion of her fury, judging his penance far inferior to the desert of his inconstancy. Wherewith the simple mother, rather complaining than correcting the stubbornness of her daughter, dismissed the messenger with only charge to salute on her behalf his mistress her dear friend and neighbour ; who, altogether ignorant of the contents of the letter, rejoiced notwithstanding that her son had written to Genivera, hoping he had imparted to her the day and the hour of his return.

Wherein, notwithstanding, she was no less frustrated than her assurance proved uncertain, in such sort that the date of the twenty days expired, aye ! two or three months fully performed, without any news of her son, she began to enter into no less terms of dolour than if she had accompanied his corpse to the fatal tomb ; exclaiming, withal, against the iniquity of the heavens in blessing her with such a posterity, and then to take him from her in the midst of the proof of his virtue. Wherein crying out against the beauty of Genivera (which she judged the only cause of his absence), she cursed also the morning wherein he went a-hunting, wishing in the end that some revelation would disclose unto her the place of his abode, to the end she might either reclaim him in whom consisted the hope of her old age and expectation of her whole house, or at least assist in person such good or evil fortune as fell to his share.

If the mother complained his disaster, her son (as it is to be thought) enjoyed small quiet and less contentment of mind ; who, now become a citizen with the beasts and birds of the forests, left neither root of tree, height of rock, nor sunny side of any green hill, without some sign or mark of his careful state ; wherein, using the point of a sharp bodkin as a supply of a steeled chisel, he would sometime engrave

the success of his love upon a hard and dried tree. Sometime a broad and thin bark, taken from some young and green spray, served him instead of paper or parchment ; wherein he ciphered with such dark letters the name of himself and his mistress, drawn together within one intricate circle, that the best mathematical in Padua or Paris would demand respite to decipher the true interpretation. One day, amongst the rest, raving upon his thoughts by the border or brink of the fountain joining (as you have heard) to his desert cottage, he imprinted these verses following upon a fair stone which the stream of the river had cast upon the shore :

O sacred sylvan Pan, and satyrs of this vale,
And ye, O woody nymphs, who weep in wretches' plaint,
Stay here your gliding steps, record my doleful tale,
Judge you what I deserve, whom loyal love hath spent :
Assist my dried eyes with fresh supply of tears,
Whose drops of dole have drained each sinew of his sap,
Or else, by fatal voice, close up my loathsome years,
Whose view, with longer life, increaseth my mishap.

Not far from thence, upon the height of a high hill, where he made every day his morning walk at the rising of the sun, was a fair and square plot, yielding at all times of the year a pleasant glee of green flowers, and other deckings of the spring ; in the middle whereof, whether it were by the device of nature, or curious industry of man, were four pillars, supporting a massy marble, squared and hewn cornerwise, according to the form of an altar, upon the which he left this monument in letters of eternity :

Thou pillar square ! on whom ere this the sacred fumes did fry
With incense to the blazing Throne and Majesty on high,
Divest thee now of royal robes, let regal office pass,
And dewéd with my tears of dole, my sacrifice embrace :
Disclose thy marble breast, and harbour here such plaint,
As neither former time hath found, nor future age shall taint.
And since disdain in love hath forced this present want of breath,
Let here appear how willingly Diego proveth death.

Round about the brim of the said stone he writ this remembrance :

Though froward fate hath forced my grief,
And black despair this deadly pain,
Yet time I trust will bring relief,
When loyal faith shall have her gain.

Till then, the storms of banished state
And penance in this hermit's cell,
Shall try her cause of wrongful hate,
Whose malice, lo ! keeps me in hell.

And upon the thin and tender bark of a beech shading the entry or door of his hermitage moved belike with some sudden apprehension of joy above his custom, writ this device :

I see thy glory shine, with glee of glistering show,
And thou, for beauty, stalled on highest seat of state,
At last, so shalt thou find, though now thou list not know,
That time thy plumes will pluck and age thy hue abate.
Then vaunt not so in gain that withers with the weed,
But deck the garland with such buds as virtue blooms :
Else shalt thou reap, with shame, but cockle for thy seed,
When I, most sure, shall have my hire from heavenly dooms.

Which being espied of his man, who, as he always kept a diligent eye upon him, so doubting these fantasies might work the effects of greater extremities, asked to what end served the lute which he brought in his wallet if not to give him solace sometime in singing the praises of her, on whose behalf he did not only offend in superstitious homage, but also in committing fond idolatry. " Will you that I fetch it," saith he, " to the end that, with Orpheus, you may stir up the trees, rocks, and hollow valleys, to bewail your mishap, and witness the penance which you make, without ever committing offence worthy of half so great a punishment ? " Wherewith he put the lute into the hand of his master ; who, albeit he reposed equal delight in the tunes of music and tears of present misery, yet, to confirm his solitary state with a remembrance of his ancient passion, he played certain dolorous notes, not without a number of hollow sighs and streams of sorrow distilling like the drops of rain down his face ; which was so disfigured that hardly could he have been descried by such as have always been his most familiars.

This was the miserable state of this unfortunate young man, who was so wholly resolved to present despair that he durst not admit the offer of better hope, and much less imagine that which now attends to restore him everyway to his entire. Albeit, like as neither the miseries or felicities of men be of perpetuity, and everything hath his proper time, so Fortune, disposed to compassion, and weary at last of the sundry wrongs she had done to the penitentiary of Genivera, lent him a means to climb the highest staff of her wheel.

Wherein, certainly, appeared a special effect of the providence of God, Who only doth, and is able, to prefer a facility in things that seem most hard and impossible in the judgment of man. Like as, also, the means whereby He works and makes the ministers of His will, are so secret and far from the knowledge of us wretches, that when we think utterly to lose anything, yet then our expectation is deceived in retaining that which erst we yielded for lost; in such sort, that as what favour soever Fortune doth give us, we are not able to assure our own estates, so likewise ought we not to despair or defy ourselves for any adversity, how great soever it appear, seeing that God, exposing daily effects of mercy upon us, willeth us to repose our hope and assurance in His goodness; which as He hath declared by manifold examples in the person of our dear friends, so our own eyes have been witnesses of the wonderful marvels He hath wrought in like cases.

For how many have we seen in our time, who, being in the power of their enemies, judged to die, yea, brought to the place where the last and fatal blow of execution should be given, were not only taken, by great marvel, out of the hands of such perils, but (for a more wonder and admiration of the mysteries of God) called to the state of a kingdom, with royal authority over a whole people: which because it is necessary to justify by some authority and ancient proof, I have thought good to impart unto you in this digression that which I have noted out of the records of Pliny; an example, albeit not familiar, yet of undoubted truth.

For at such time as Ladislaus, son of King Albert, reigned in Hungary and Bohemia, being of tender years and semblable experience for the direction of his state, was constrained to repose all his credit in the opinions of his barons and lords of advice; amongst whom, by occasion of civil sedition, grew a peculiar grudge between the children of the Lord John Hunyadi Waywode (deceased not long afore, and in his life the only protector of the king and tutor of the multitude) and Henry, Earl of Cilli, next cousin and parent to the king that then lived. This quarrel grew to such terms of revenge, that the Earl of Cilli, being one day in a church in one of the chief cities of Hungary, was murdered by the hands of the said Hunyadi: which being brought immediately to the ears of the king, he was advised to

dissimulate his just wrath, for that at such hour he was not of sufficient power to give correction to so great a presumption.

Albeit, retiring immediately to Buda, the ordinary place of his abode, and where his greatest force remained, he seized upon both the children of Waywode, and struck off the head of the eldest, called Ladislaus, deferring justice to the other, named Matthias, for the respect of his young years: albeit he inclosed him in sure prison within the kingdom of Bohemia. Where, as he remained without hope of long life, or end of his imprisonment but by death, so it chanced, not long after, that the King Ladislaus, coming to do execution of the infant of Waywode, died in the same town where he endured his miserable captivity.

Whereupon the Bohemians chose for their king one George Podebrad. The Hungarians, on the other side, advertised of the death of their sovereign, began to enter into compassion towards the prisoner, and preferring to memory the virtue of his father, at such time as he bare authority in their public weal, they proclaimed Matthias King of Hungary, who, being in the custody and danger of George, newly adopted King of Bohemia, was not only delivered by him, but also he gave him his daughter in marriage; by which means, of a poor desperate prisoner, he became, in one instant, a puissant king. Whereunto as he durst never before aspire by any hope or likelihood that appeared, so, if it had not been for his adversity, he had never sat in the seat royal of Hungary; both for that they would have chosen another; his elder brother Ladislaus had been afore him; the count which they slew would have resisted such preferment; but, chiefly, it is like the Hungarians would not have given him such large title of dignity, if it had not been the respect of compassion they used upon his miserable captivity.

Who, as he came to the crown (as you see) by the same means which the other lost it, so the famous historiographer, Titus Livius, makes mention of the like accident happening to Jacques de Lusignan, uncle to Peter, King of Cyprus, at the solemn feast of whose coronation the Genoese and Venetians contended for superiority, either of them striving for the preferment of the first place in that assembly; in the presence of whom, Jacques de Lusignan, partial on the Venetians' side, caused certain of the Genoese to be executed: whereof the state of Genoa being advertised, determined to take cruel vengeance.

Whereunto they added such expedition, that, in a moment, they had levied a great army under the conduction of Piero Fregoso, a most excellent captain by sea, who discharged the credit of his commission with so good fortune, that he took the isle and put the city to sack, reserving, notwithstanding, the life of Jacques Lusignan, whom he carried prisoner to Genoa, where the senate enjoined him to perpetual imprisonment within the strongest tower of their city: wherein albeit he continued (without hope of liberty or expectation to enjoy any part of his ancient dignity) by the space of nine years, yet it happened, in the end of the said term, that Fortune, turning her wheel, gave safe-conduct to the King Piero to pass into the other world without heir of his body.

By reason whereof the inhabitants of the isle, considering Seigneur Lusignan was of the blood royal and next parent to their dead lord, took such compassion of his captivity, with a remorse of his long penance, that, in consideration of his misery, proceeding by their occasion, they redeemed his liberty with a great exaction of money, and anointed him King of Cyprus; which peradventure he had never possessed, if the desolation of his imprisonment had not wrought the means—albeit he had enjoined his liberty and pursued it to the uttermost.

Such is the wonderful providence of God, punishing the wicked at His pleasure, and (restoring the misery of such as despair of worldly succour) exposeth effects of His omnipotence exceeding the expectation and imagination of the creatures of the earth. Such was, also, the case of Dom Diego; who, determined wholly to spend the remainder of his life in the study of solitary philosophy upon the wild and rich Mounts Pyrenees, was relieved and restored when he was least in opinion or hope of succour.

For, as you have heard, he had a neighbour and dear friend, called Dom Roderico, who, above the rest, lamented chiefly the absence and misfortune of Diego. It chanced within twenty and two months after the pilgrim began his voyage, that this Roderico (having been in Gascony to dispatch certain necessary affairs there) in his return to Barcelona—whether he had missed the path of his right way or that the spirit of God (as it was most like) guided him—was, ere he wist, upon the career that led him directly to

that place of the mounts where was the ordinary residence of his great friend Diego; who grew so fast into declination and debility of his body, that if the clemency of the Highest had not overshadowed him, he had wrought the wretched effect of that which he chiefly desired, that is with the loss of life to give end to his hard penance.

Dom Roderico, wandering thus in the wilderness of the mounts, dispersing his train to discover some places of habitation, was advertised by one of his people, being within twelvescore yards of the hermit's cave, of a track and steps of men, not without some marvel notwithstanding, for that the unfertility of the place showed no abode nor repair for civil people. Whereupon, as they debated, and were in device to appoint one of the company to follow the trace somewhat further, they saw one enter the mouth of the cave, which was Dom Diego, who came from the top of the hill afore mentioned, where he had newly performed his morning complaint, with his face directly toward the coast where he judged was the oracle of the saint to whom he dressed his devotions.

The knight sent one of his valets to approach the cave and know what they were that lived so solitarily, and withal to demand the highway to Barcelona. But he, discovering afar the situation of the hole, so well fortified and rampired with stones and blocks couched in the form of a trench, fearing the same to be the receptacle or fort of some that kept house by the highway-side, living of large revenue, durst neither come near it nor ask the way as he was commanded by his master: to whom as he returned with more fear of his shadow than true report of that he had in charge, so the valiant knight, of more courage than his cowardly servant, put spurs to his horse, galloping to the very door of the cave, where he ceased not to call and knock, till he saw come out a man so disfigured with leanness of his face and other exterior deformity of his body, that his very regard moved compassion to Roderico; who, asking what he was, demanded also the common way to Barcelona.

This was the servant of Diego; who answered that he could yield him no reason of the way to Barcelona, and less instruct him touching the coasts of the country: "for that," saith he, not without some sighs and other doleful regards "we are two poor brethren, whom the adventure of fortune

hath brought hither to do penance, and mortify our present age for the sins and offences of our youth passed."

Which words of two poor brethren, brought thither as strangers by the guide of Fortune, with the present remembrance of Diego and his servant, argued such suspicion to Roderico that he alighted; not for that he thought to encounter him whom he was most desired to embrace, but to see only the singularities of the rock and the mystery of the close castle, builded in the belly of the earth. Where finding him whom he searched (without knowing, notwithstanding, what he was), he entered into conference together of the difference between the felicity of the solitary life and miseries which they find that participate with the wretched follies of this world.

"For," saith he, "the mind withdrawn from the view of worldly vanities takes his only pleasure in the contemplation of heavenly things, being always more apt to observe the commandments of God with a sincere reverence to their Maker than those which haunt the common conversation of men. Wherein, truly (when all is said) continual frequentation one with another, delights, ambitions, coveteousness, and superfluities of all vices which we find in this confused amass and corrupt world, do cause us to mistake ourselves, forget our duty towards our Creator, fall into a perilous disdain of pity and charity, and sometime to divert the sincerity of the true religion, and abuse the integrity and undoubted interpretation of the Gospel: which I leave to be debated at large by the theologians, to whom such charge doth chiefly appertain."

As the unknown hermit and the knight Roderico were in these devices, certain of his servants, visiting every cell and cellar of the cave, found in the top of a vault, framed of certain spars of wood rammed in the earthy wall at both ends, two saddles; the one whereof (seeming to have served heretofore some fair jennet) was covered with crimson velvet fringed round about with silver thrum, studded with nails of sundry enamel, and armed with plates of steel wrought curiously upon with certain rays and streams of pure gold; which (albeit the rust had defaced the steel) lost nothing of his entire and beauty.

And as one of the company offered to buy them, seeing neither horse nor mule worthy to wear such furniture, the knight, having ended his discourse with the master hermit,

sounded to horse, with intent to leave the poor men in peace and search some other means to find out the highway. Whereupon, he that was desirous to buy the saddles, presented them to his master; who, as he beheld them, felt a second motion or remembrance of his friend Diego. Wherewith, searching the harness and every pendle of the saddle, he found this inscription written in in Spanish upon the crupper, "*Quebrantar la fè es cosa muy fea*": which is in English, "to break thy faith is a detestable thing."

This device restored cause of new astonishment, for that it agreed with the ordinary stamp which Dom Diego bare always in his armour: which the rather confirmed him in opinion that without doubt the saddle appertained to the one of the two pilgrims; whom as he began to behold with a more piercing regard than afore, without discerning in either of them any sign or mark of knowledge, by reason of their hideous and disfigured hue, so Dom Diego, seeing the diligence of his friend, with desire he had to discover him, began to labour of a passion of trembling fear, with such jealous doubt of himself that the blood moved in the inner parts, and ascended (maugre his resistance) into the face and other places of discovery, bewrayed the inward alteration of his mind; which, with the uncertain regard of his eyes, showed to Roderico an absolute assurance of that which erst he durst not suspect. And that which gave also credit to his conceit was a lock of his curled hair, which he kept wrapt about his right ear. Whereupon he dismissed all suspicion, and as one assured of his doubt, threw his arms about the neck of his friend, watering his breast with the tears of his eyes, and said unto him:

"Alas! Seigneur Diego, what disfavour of the heavens has kept you so long from the company of those that die of distress in the absence of you whose presence was the pillar of their consolation? What be they that have procured this long eclipse of your name; when it ought to expose the clearest light, both for the glory of your present youth, and honour of your future old age? Ah! is it my company that moves this long silence in you? Is it I that have deserved this wrong at your hands, to abuse the virtue of my honest friendship with a shameful fear to disclose yourself unto me, and dumb regards without argument of gladness? Do you think, alas! that I know not him whom I embrace? No!

no! I cannot be so simple, nor my judgment blinded any longer in the knowledge of him whom the secret instinct of my heart discovered at my first entry into this cave; neither is there any part in me of judgment, that doubteth you to be the same Seigneur Diego, whose renown resounds the uttermost confines of Spain: and God forbid that I depart here hence, without carrying with me the glory of equal contentment to two indifferently passioned in your absence, the one to myself, joying in my happy fortune, to draw you out of the dungeon of this calamity, the other in making so gladsome a present to your mother; imparting also the joyful news to your subjects and servants, whose eyes are not yet dry with the tears of your departure."

Here Dom Diego, seeing he could no longer dissemble that which was so plainly disclosed, and construing to the best the thankful congratulations of his friend, began to relent in his heart no less than the gladsome mother in recovering her child that hath been long kept from her, or the chaste wife, long destitute of the presence of her dear husband, rejoiceth when she holds him in her arms and may embrace him at pleasure. Wherein, being also indifferently passioned, between delight and dolour, honest shame and semblable fear, passing a declaration of his inward trouble of mind by the conduits of his eyes distilling streams of sorrow and joy by great abundance, returned the embracements of his friend with no less hearty affection than the other with good-will summoned this new acquaintance, saying:

"Ah! how secret is the determination of God and His judgments inscrutable! I resolved here to attend the end of my miserable days, without making my intent privy to any man in the world, and lo! now am I descried when I feared least my discovery. I am truly," saith he, with a pitiful discharge of a number of dolorous sighs, "the same unfortunate Diego, and your dear friend, who (persecuted with continual affliction and torment of fortune) was so weary of the world that I chose this desert habitation as a secret receptacle, to perform the rest of the voyage which nature hath enjoined me in this transitory and wretched vale; where, seeing you have unhappily discovered me, I beseech you (by the honour of your name and virtue of that friendship continued between us from the beginning) let it suffice you that you have seen me, without procuring

impediment to the rest of my willing penance, by imparting the place of my retreat to any."

Whereunto Roderico did not only refuse to condescend, but also, continuing his former earnest, persuaded him to discontinue that brutal life, with admonition that God had made them noble and given them authority, not with charge to live idle, either in their palaces or other obscure place, but so to bestow their talent that with the example of their virtue, the ignorant may be instructed in the trade of honest living, the good men supported in their integrity, and the bad sort kept in awe by their justice.

"And for your part," saith he, "how vainly may your subjects and people rejoice, in that God hath blessed them with a lord to their contentation, if, afore the experience of our virtue, they lose the cause of their contentment. What comfort or quiet, think you, can harbour within the careful breast of your desolate mother, who hath made the world happy with so honest a son, bringing you up with such diligence that you lack nothing to make you perfect, and in this sort to lose the fruit and expectation of such nurture? It is you, sir, whom duty commands to yield obedience to your parents, succour to the afflicted, and to do justice to such as demand right at your hand. Alas! it is your poor subjects, who, lamenting your absence, complain of the wrong you do to them in denying the use of your presence. It is you that overwhelm the old years of your mother with untimely desolation. It is you that reneweth the course of her continual complaints, in breaking your faith touching the day of your return."

Wherewith the impatience of Dom Diego in hearing the objections of his own faults brake his further discourse, excusing himself in this sort:

"It is easy," saith he, "for him that is well to comfort the sick, and hard for such as be in distress to admit any counsel in their evil. You find a facility to give judgment of my disease, being wholly ignorant of the cause; and accuse my absence rather by desire to do me good, than of any malice you owe to my wretched state; but if you understood the circumstance of my misfortune, and the occasion that first moved me to make trial of this solitary life, you would convert (I doubt not) this sinister conceit of the wrong which you charge me to do to all men to an opinion of right

on my behalf, seeing the most wise and assured of all, assailed with the like torment of spirit which I feel quarrelling with the constancy of my mind, have left example of faults of no less fragility, than mine, I confess, is justly meritorious of reprehension."

Wherewith, drawing Roderico apart from the rest, he preferred a particular discourse of his love, his possibility and good hope in the beginning, his sinister success in the end, with the continuation of the unjust cruelty of his mistress; whose name he could not pronounce without such floods of tears and scorching sighs that for the time they stayed the course of his words, moving such compassion to the tender heart of Roderico, that he was forced to keep him company with semblable kindness; assaying notwithstanding to remove the veil of such desperate opinion, with request to discontinue his savage life in the desolate forests.

Wherein he prevailed as much as if he had undertaken to persuade a multitude without a tongue, for that the resolved hermit told him that he would not only be tenant to the mounts so long as nature and he could agree upon the bargain of life, but also avowed unto him, by oath, that (without the good-will of his Genivera) he would never return to his country, and (to avoid further discovery) would seek to shroud himself in a place more savage and less frequented than this. "For," saith he, "like as my return would bring but increase of passion, specially in being denied favour where I have found a former repulse, I beseech you, let it suffice that I feel the burden of one mishap, ceasing to allure me to the proof of a second affliction, worse I am sure than my present punishment, whereunto I have added a contentment with an immovable patience."

Wherein his reasons seemed to include such indifferent justice and pity, that Roderico could not reply but with terms of compassion; with consent that he should continue his abode there yet two months, in which time, he sware unto him by the honour of knighthood, that, for his part, he would not only make his peace with his cruel mistress, but also procure mutual conference between them; assuring him, withal, that he should not be discovered by him nor any of his train. Wherewith leaving him a field-bed, and two men, with money to furnish his want, he took his leave, with firm promise to see him again in short time, with cause

of more contentment than at present he left him full of annoy, and himself no less disquieted for the trouble of his friend.

Wherein God knoweth in what sort he detested by the ways the wilful cruelty of Genivera, blaspheming no less against the whole sex—peradventure with some reason. For there is I cannot tell what secret motions in the minds of women, which have their hours and times as the increasing or diminishing of the moon. Whereof as it is very hard (without great experience) to give any reason touching the cause, so we see it is such a principle or generality amongst them to imprint so surely in their hearts these frail or rather inconstant instincts of mobility, that the wisest and most subtle that ever was lacked skill to observe the seasons of this imperfect humour.

Dom Roderico by this was arrived at his house, where he neither forgat his own promise nor the necessity of his friend ; for the next day he went to the lodging of Genivera, not to communicate with her as yet, and much less to impart his fortunate encounter in his return out of Gascony, but rather to sound, by some secret circumstance afar off, the doings and determination of the girl, and whether any other usurped the glory of the victory which of right belonged to his friend Diego. Wherein he was so subtle in this drift that he accosted the page of the gentlewoman, in whose bosom was builded the only storehouse of her most secret affairs ; forgetting therein the precept of the wise, who wills us to commit no counsel to such as are weak of reason, and for want of discretion do lack the gift of secretness, whereby they are not able to govern the liberty of their tongues.

Such was the simplicity of this page, whose soft humour the knight fed with such fine diet that, by little and little, he drew the worm quite from his nose, and was made so privy to the practice of Genivera that he understood that, since her unjust displeasure with Dom Diego, she had vowed her good-will to a Biscayan, as then the steward of her mother's house, a gentleman very poor, but for the rest of sufficient perfection ; and that he was now in the country, from whence he gave advertisement to his mistress that within two days he would come, with two others his dear friends, to take Genivera away by stealth ; not forgetting also that he only (with a gentlewoman) were appointed to attend her into

Biscay, like as they were privy to every circumstance of their secret flight.

Which discourse of the boy albeit moved show of inward alteration in Roderico, chiefly for the infidelity and treason of the inconstant Genivera, yet he dissimulated so well his fretting anger that his passion was not discovered by the simple page ; with whom he joined in commendation touching the resolution of his mistress, whom he said was not void of reason to make her choice by the counsel and consent of her fancy, seeing her mother used such slender diligence to bestow her as she deserved. "And albeit," saith he, "the gentleman be not rich nor of large possessions, yet thy mistress hath sufficient means to supply both their wants that way ; only she declareth a virtue in yielding so firm affection to his honest poverty."

All which as he pronounced by another tongue than the true interpreter of his heart, so, being alone, crying out of the inconstancy of women, he seemed to put no difference between their wilful blindness and natural simplicity of young infants ; who, when they seem most wrabbed, their nurse offering them the choice of an apple or fig and a jewel of great price, are rather appeased with the fig than once look at the thing of value ; so some women, whether it be the mist of fond love that blears their eyes, or the doom of a cursed destiny which God hath appointed to plague their malicious disposition, seem oftentimes so void of reason, that, being presented with the choice of two offers far differing in value, they are rather apt to embrace the worst, than ready to admit the best which is most convenient for their honour and calling.

He defaced the beauty of Genivera with the disloyalty she used towards her first servant, condemning her judgment in refusing the friendship of a nobleman, famous by wealth and virtue and the very paragon of the whole country, for the society of a poor companion, whose parents being unknown argued a doubt of his descent, and she altogether a stranger to his disposition. Wherein as he inveighed also indifferently against the partiality of Fortune and blindness of Love (who being without eyes themselves do likewise dim the understanding of such as they keep in miserable captivity), so he sware in great rage to cast such a block in the way of the two lovers that neither the Biscayan should reap the fruits due

to the travail and service of his friend Diego, nor his cruel mistress forbear any longer to send a pleasant calm to the stormy tempest which keeps him now at anchor amongst the perilous rocks of the Pyrenees.

For being informed of this convenient means to ease the distress of his languishing friend, who fed only of the hope of his promise, he failed not to add an assured effect accordingly. Albeit for his further instruction touching the sure convey of the mystery, he went the second day after to visit the mother of Genivera; where he understood by the page that the steward was come with two other valiant gentlemen to assist the enterprise, and that the next night, upon the first hour after midnight, when the old lady and all her servants, overwhelmed with the charm or mantle of dead sleep, were least apt to suspect conspiracies, they determined to depart the castle with his mistress, who, for her part, had furnished her wants of all necessaries touching the voyage.

This hasty resolution required a speedy diligence in the knight, who, for his part also, used no less expedition than was convenient; for, being come to his house, he caused to arm ten or twelve gentlemen of his neighbours and vassals, to whom he communicated the sum of his intent. And the same night, some two or three hours afore the departure of the Biscayan and his company, marched in secret manner directly in the way where they should pass, till they came to a grove or coppice of young wood, regarding the highway on the one side and a main common or plain on the other side; where, bestowing himself and his company in ambush, he heard immediately the noise of horses and men approaching with an unfortunate diligence.

The light of the moon discovered the gentlewoman, whose beauty seemed to contend with the brightness of the same. Next unto whom rode her miserable lover; whom as soon as Roderico perceived within the danger of his career, he felt a conversion of his ancient anger into a compassion of present fury, whose force, summoning him to an effect of murder, caused him to couch his spear in his rest, directing his angry course so rightly towards the poor Biscayan, that, in one moment, he pierced him through the body, sending him without other passport to the miserable crew of those wretches, who, serving under the ensign of foolish Love, do perish unhappily under the conduction of a blind and naked

boy ; advising the rest of the Biscayans to eschew the like reward, unless they attended a semblable hire to him that had wrongfully encroached upon the ground of another.

They seemed more willing to accept his offer than ready to revenge the death of their captain ; whom, seeing the discovery of the whole ambush, they left on the ground (taking his leave of his mistress with the last breath of his life), and reposed their chiefest confidence in the swiftness of their horses, without regard who pursued their hasty flight. Immediately two of the company of Dom Roderico, disguised in unknown armour, seized upon the sorrowful Genivera, who could not use such patience in the death of her Biscayan lover, but her open cries, complaining of the villainy of the murder, witnessed her inward sorrow of mind.

Wherein, according to her shortness of her breath (labouring then in passion of extreme dolour), she exclaimed without respect against them, crying to perform an execution of their cruelty upon her, as well as they had discharged the office of unjust tormenters of one who was of more price than they all. And so, turning her to the dead body of her late friend, washed away the blood of his wounds with the tears of her eyes, not without great exclamation against the malice of her destinies in abridging her expectation of long joy with so short and tragical an end ; forcing her to resign the society of him whom she loved no less than herself, to commit the honour of her virginity to a prey to thieves and villains. Wherewith, Roderico, without disclosing his face or other part of knowledge, took her by the hand with persuasion to dismiss these dolours, seeing that her complaints had no virtue to restore life to him that was dead, and much less to take vengeance of the fact.

But she, renewing the remembrance of him that lay dead on the ground by certain streams of his blood which she espied upon the gauntlet of Roderico, began to lose more patience than afore, in such sort, that the rudest of the company, having for an increase of his terrible regard a visorn, or false beard of black hair, curled like the Mauretine, with a pair of counterfeit eyes of glass, approached (by appointment) the trembling Genivera ; to whose fear he added an increase of terror in offering the point of his naked dagger to her white and delicate neck, threatening that if she continued in these terms his hands should perform the sacrifice

of her life to the shadow of the villain whom she lamented so much, " and who," saith he, " deserved rather to be broken in pieces of the wheel by the executioners of torments than end his life by the hands of a valiant knight."

Which mortal threats (as she thought) forcing her to an unwilling silence, left her only the assistance of her eyes to yield compassion to her grief ; who set abroach so largely the conduits of their watery humours, that the passion of her heart appeared in the abundance of her tears and broken sighs ; whose force prevailed so much over her tender resistance, that in the end her outward dole seemed inclosed and couched by force in the inner corners of her heavy heart. In the meanwhile the rest of the company had carried the body of the dead Biscayan to a fielden chapel, builded upon the high-way-side, where he sleeps in his fatal bed, covered with a tester of green sods.

A notable example, sure, proving the ordinary success of secret contracts and marriages made by stealth ; where both the honour of the contractors loseth his virtue, and the commandment of God broken, enjoining us by special words to a dutiful humility and sincere obedience to our parents ; to whom the law giveth authority to punish us by deprivation and loss of the inheritance which natural right would give us if we did not rebel and abuse the liberty which we enjoy by their goodness. Wherein the indiscreet mothers, nowadays, deserve most imputation of blame, who, in giving place to the wilful inclination of their fond youth, do account it no offence to suffer their daughters to communicate matters of love with their household servants ; not remembering the infirmity of such tender vessels, how prone men are by nature to do evil, and lastly how ready the evil spirit is to enter, finding us unprovided, to the end that, falling into his danger, he may triumph in the ruin of our souls purified through the blood of our Saviour.

Which as I need not go about to prove with new authorities, considering I have noted sufficient touching both respects in divers places of this translation, so, wishing well to all children, and amendment to such fond mothers as seem more careful to flatter the vain appetite of their frail imps, than curious to give them the rod of correction, which keeps them always within the view of virtue, it is time to resort to Dom Roderico and his train, who, travelling three or four days with his

captive Genivera (not knowing any of the company), arrived at last within half a day's journey of the hermitage of Diego, whom he gave warning of his coming by a forerider of his company.

Who, also, for his part, as he had received such comfort in expectation of the effect of the promise of his friend, that in the time of his absence he seemed to recover the best part of his ancient beauty; so the news of the approach of his mistress breathed in him such double passion of jealous joy and doubtful fear, that, seeming uncertain wherein to resolve himself, he durst scarcely admit a possibility in that whereof the message imported absolute assurance, yielding notwithstanding special thanks to the director of the stars for this last favour showed upon his distress, in preferring him to the sight of her who, being the cause of his torment, may also put her last hand to his fatal execution. "For with what greater joy or contentment," saith he, "can I visit the dark shades and ghosts disburdened of this life than to yield up breath in the presence of her, whom if I have honoured in my life, it is nothing in respect of the service my soul hath vowed on her behalf in the other world, in going afore to perform the office of her harbinger among the angels in paradise."

In the meanwhile Dom Roderico, who hitherto had not discovered himself to Genivera, was disarmed and with open face accosteth her as she rides, debating with her in this sort:

"I doubt not at all but you find it very strange to see me in this place in such attire, and upon an occasion so contrary to the rank and honour I profess, and the rather by the experience of the present injury you think you have received by me, who hitherto have borne the face of an affectioned friend to all your house. And, methinks, I see how you dispose yourself to accuse the injustice of my cause in forcing you to exchange the company of your dear friend, to commit you to the society of these desert confines. Wherein also, as I have nothing to defend me from imputation of just blame on your behalf but the virtue of that true friendship which knits together with an indissoluble unity the hearts of men; so, for your part, if you will rightly measure my honest meaning in this enterprise, and removing the veil of partial disdain, digest the angry beginning with imagination of a pleasant end, I dare abide the sentence of

your indifferent judgment whether I be wholly worthy of reprehension or you altogether void of fault.

"I beseech you, also, consider that the true and loyal servant, endeavouring himself to perform to the uttermost the will of him that hath power to command him, doth not only deserve a chief place of favour with his lord, but also a consideration according to the merit of his service. Which I do not infer to solicit my thanks with you, whom I have rather offended than contented in exposing an effect of honest zeal I owe to all virtuous and chaste ladies; whereof, for your part, you shall find me no niggard on your behalf in time and place of need; desiring you (in dismissing all sinister conceits of unworthy grudge) to prefer no less modesty than ought to accompany a gentlewoman of your age and calling; seeing that honour seemeth best contented with the place and subject where he remaineth, using courtesy, than in abusing their greatness to prefer malicious cruelty. And because we approach near the place where I intend (God willing) to present you, cutting off now your suspense with an exposition of my meaning, you must note that that which is already past, with the residue yet to be performed, tendeth to no other end than to relieve the distress of the most loyal lover that this day hath his being under the circle of the moon.

"It is the noble and valiant knight Dom Diego, the most constant servant that ever bare name to be worthy to do service to any lady—who for the respect of your displeasure hath registered himself amid the hideous rocks of these savage and solitary valleys—it is to him I lead you, protesting to you by the heavens, that the misery wherein I saw him plunged on all sides, not six weeks passed, touched me so near, that, if the sacrifice of my life only would have discharged the price or ransom of his martyrdom, you had been free from this passion of perplexity by my means, and I not partaker of these angry regards which threaten the utter loss of your good-will. Wherein, as it is only I that have committed the offence (if there be any fault at all), so, I beseech you, let me only endure the punishment; with request that you extend compassion upon the desolation of him, who, almost wasted with pining misery, reposeth (for your sake) a felicity in the extremity of his hard penance."

If Genivera were half desperate afore the death of her Biscayan lover, it is now she is ready to exceed the limits of

reason, fretting with such inward spite against the simple record of the name of Diego, that her malicious rage, forcing a silence for the time, drove her to a respite in forming her answer. Albeit as the passion of impatience is neither so perilous nor of such continuance as other trances, accidental or proper, so, unclosing her eyes, she fired them upon Roderico, with no less furious regard than the tigress beholding the devouring of her whelps afore her face; and wringing her hands, with her long and small arms upon her tender breast, she exclaimed against his discourtesy in this sort:

"Ah! murdering traitor!" saith she, "no more worthy of the honour of knighthood, for that thou hast forfeited thy faith by a detestable treason, is it upon me thou oughtest to wreak such an effect of thy malicious villainy, or hast thou dissembled thy grudge so long with a show of fleering favour (like the crocodile) towards all our house, to vomit thy venom upon me who never deserved but well at thy hands? Hast thou the face to entreat me for another, seeing in my presence thou has killed him whose blood I will pursue upon thee and thine, so long as I have one gasp of breath to accuse thy villainy? What authority hast thou to inquire of my doings or impeach my determination, or in what sort am I bound to yield thee account of any resolution of mine? Who hath made thee arbitrator, or much less given thee commission to debate upon the articles of my marriage; unless thy malice will force me to love that disloyal villain, for whom thou hast committed an act of perpetual infamy to thy name? Whereof, also, for my part, I will reserve such remembrance in the storehouse of my heart, that only death shall take away the desire to revenge the wrong thou hast done me.

"And albeit Fortune hath made me thy prisoner, with power to dispose of me at thy pleasure, yet have I one resistance to defeat the extremity of thy force, which, also, I will not fail to put into execution,—that is, that afore thy traitorous client Diego quench his thirst with the precious juice of my virginity, these hands are ready to give me a fatal passport to visit (with bloody ghost) the loyalty of him whom thou hast slain by traitorous conspiracy. Therefore, if I may honestly request thee whom I hate, or if there be expectation of favour in a mortal enemy, I beseech thee either perform the last fact of thy cruelty upon me, or, according to thy duty,

dismiss me with my woman and page to go whither our fortune will guide us."

"God forbid," saith Roderico, "that, in doing wrong to the hope of my friend, I become the occasion of his untimely death and loss of you, wandering by the unknown paths of these wild deserts." And continuing still his former earnest to move her to some pity upon the poor penitentiary, he seemed to gain as much as if he had assailed to number the sand lying upon the brink of the endless ocean. Albeit, with the supply of several discourses, they arrived at last at the rich hospital of Dom Diego; who, for want of curious conceits to welcome his cruel mistress, presented his loathsome personage overgrown with hair, and, for a more show of humility, fell prostrate afore her, embracing her feet not without great effusion of tears, saying:

"Alas, good madam, the only hope of my life and comfort of my careful heart! how long shall I hang in the doubtful balance of my present death or life? What date, alas! have you appointed to give end to my desperate sorrows, if my penance be not sufficient for the offence I have committed? Yea! what torment have you in store which I am not ready to endure to yield you contentment? Neither had I had breath at this present to put you in remembrance of my distress, if I had not withholden my hands from fatal violation to witness my loyalty on your behalf, and much less been in case to prefer mine innocence; if the only food of secret contemplation of your beauty had not distilled continual nurture to the vital parts of my consumed corpse. And as you may easily imagine what pleasure I found in this long and painful absence, so I grieve not in anything that is past, nor refuse to abide any future punishment, if only I may receive at your hands the reward of my constancy, which I may boldly compare with the most assured that ever was."

Genivera, swelling with disdain and full of feminine rage, appearing in her sparkling eyes and other parts of her face, did not only refuse to answer, but also forbare to behold him whom she hated. She barred him also the benefit of her face, in bestowing her looks to the contrary side; which moved cause of double sorrow to the poor afflicted lover, who, being yet upon his knees, renewing the force of his tears with the view of the tyranny of his mistress,

seemed to draw, with much ado, a feeble voice from the very bottom of his stomach, and restored the terms of his former complaint in this sort :

" Seeing neither the sincerity of my faith, approved with so long and loyal service, nor the view of my present misery, whereof I have made a painful experience without intermission these twenty-two months, be of force to persuade a credit in my constancy ; seeing also my doleful tears, derived of the injustice of your disdain, are denied to work effects of just pity in you, and lastly, seeing without the consent of your good-will I find an impossibility to live, I beseech you, and by the virtue and courtesy which ought to appear in you, I conjure you, as the last request wherewith your unfortunate servant will trouble you in this world, to mortify with your own hands the remembrance of that offence, which you imagine I have done against you, with the execution of present death.

" Refuse not, O cruel mistress, to do vengeance upon him who is weary of his life, and receive at last this willing offer importing two singular commodities, the one a pleasure to me to buy thy contentment with the price of my blood, the other an absolute quiet to thyself in being satisfied with his death whose life thou abhorrest. Wherein, certainly, for my part, I am to account the hour most happy which, closing up my mortal eyes, doth sound also the fatal retreat of my long sorrows. But the chiefest felicity I account in this last act of my life is that, in being so willing to die by the stroke of thy hand, I shall leave thee to imagine how ready I was to honour thee with the unfeigned service of my life, the world to give judgment of my loyalty, and the gods to take vengeance of thy cruelty.

" If there be reason in my request, why defer you the execution, or if I have failed in my demand, why stay you to answer ? It is now, alas ! that I meet the full of my mishap, being denied both death and life by her to whom, of all the world, I have most desired to make declaration of obedience in any sort whatsoever. Alas ! why stay you to rid me from torment, and yourself out of care to behold any more this desolate knight, who (denied to participate other favour) accounts it a last felicity to give up the ghost in your presence ? "

Wherewith, finding no remorse of stubborn disdain in his mistress, who in all this time would not give him the favour

of a simple look of the eye, and much less dispose herself to answer in any sort to his complaints, he felt such war between the force of his passion and debility of his senses, being void of natural strength, that, in kissing her foot, he fell into a deadly sound, pronouncing only these words with the departure of his breath : " Ah ! feeble reward of unfeigned loyalty ! "

Roderico, amazed no less with the tragical farewell of his friend, than moved with just anger against the unseemly tyranny of Genivera, commanded certain of his company to restore the trance of Diego, and with the rest addressed him to the merciless gentlewoman, whom he threatened in this sort :

" If the continuance of thy cruelty force me to change affection, assure thyself (detestable woman, and enemy to the virtue of all your sex !) thou shalt not escape without the hire of the wrong wherewith thou abuseth the honour which is offered thee. Makest thou such conscience to yield compassion, or admit the honest service of so noble a gentleman as this, presented with such humility, that erst (without regard of honesty or virtue) committed thyself and honour (as a fugitive) to the government of a runagate stranger ? What cruelty can be greater, or by what reason canst thou challenge other amends or consideration of the wrong thou hast unjustly conceived, than an humble prostration with so many tears in token of repentance ? And for thy part, what canst thou desire more of this gentleman, than, in forgiving the fault of thy false contract with thy last minion, not only to forbear to enter into suspicion touching thy unseemly running away with an unknown villain, but also, craving the guerdon of his constancy, is at point to sacrifice his life to appease thy anger and yield thee contentment ?

" For end, I advise you to change opinion, lest I commit to as many morsels thy disloyal body, as this woeful knight not long since made bloody division of his unhappy hawk, the only cause of his present distress, and, by your own folly, ready to give you a title of the most tyrannous and arrogant gentlewoman that is ; neither have I begun this enterprise to leave it unperfected, or give it over with this success. Wherefore, seeing you take pleasure in extremities, I will feed your delight with the offer of love or death. Whereof as I give you the benefit of the choice, so I swear unto you by Him that is not ignorant of my intent, that, if you refuse the

first, you shall not fail in this place to pass under the sentence of the last : wherein myself will not fear to discharge the office of the fatal minister, in imbruing my hands in the blood of her whose folly only causeth the death of one of my dearest friends."

These threats dismayed nothing the malicious Genivera, nor abated any part of her presumptuous arrogance ; for who had seen the fiery regards of her eyes, the knitting of her brows, whetting of her teeth, closing her delicate fingers, with other braveries, exceeding far the simplicity of such tender years, unexperienced as yet in the assaults and malice of an adverse fortune, would have said she had rather procured terror to Roderico, than given place to his fearful offer or summons of love or death, defying also the rigour of his authority with these terms :

" Like as, thou catiff knight ! " saith she, " he that is once thorough bathed in the suds of innocent blood, is so fleshed and hardened in villainy that no act of detestation seems any sin to him ; so it is no marvel if thou, which hast committed unnatural slaughter of one whose true virtue exceeded the flattering fame of thy renown, and gave no place to the integrity of life, art not without fear to commit me to the same guide, lest, in suffering me to live, thou couldest not avoid the justice which I am to procure upon the injury I have received. Besides, I am here ready to lay my head upon the block of execution, rather than to give the honour of my virginity to any ; seeing the cursed hands have deprived me of him to whom both the tree and fruit did only appertain.

" Neither do I tremble in the remembrance of the stroke of death, how cruel soever it appear, for that I shall the rather stand afore the Throne from whence is granted all vengeance to such wretches as thou art. Ah, God ! seeing Thou art righteous, why dost Thou not thunder justice upon the wrong which these outlaws have done Thy innocent hand-maid ? Ah, traitor Roderico ! persuade thyself that thou canst not offer me so cruel a death as I am most ready to endure the torment, hoping the same shall serve hereafter as the only cause and means of the indifferent destruction of thyself and him for whom thou travailest thus in vain."

Here her woman and page began to persuade her to pity on the behalf of the knight that suffered such passion for her

sake, with consent to the honest requests of Roderico, soliciting her so frankly touching the extremities of them both, that she entered terms of reprehension against their honest meaning.

"Will you," saith she, "be either enchanted with the feigned tears of this disloyal who passioneth himself upon credit, or stand in awe of the tyrannous threats of this murderer, whose villainy, with covered face, hath taken away the life of your master? Ah! unhappy girl that I am, it is now, alas! that I feel the heavy hands of Fortune; whose malice hath not only put me between the hands of him whom I hate no less than I have already experienced his dissembled love, but also, in doubling my mishap, assaileth me with the sinister persuasions of my servants and companions of care, who ought rather to allow my resolution in death than prefer motion in any sort touching my consent to requests of no less corruption than themselves be infected who solicit in so bad a case. Ah, Love! I prove too late, alas! the infidelity of thy promise, finding so bad a recompense for so dutiful obedience to yield at thy summons, and so slender defence for such as commit themselves faithfully to the government of thy lore.

"Why should nature be more curious to frame us of a more delicate mould, tempered with a metal of fragility, than careful to leave us armour of resistance against the assaults of fortune? For if I had not had a pearl of flattering affection painted in my face, I had not tasted the beginning of a pleasure, whose dolorous farewell-for-ever brings more cause of grief, than the apprehension at the first engendered perfect contentment: for being, alas! upon the point to sip of the sugared cup, with expectation to feed of the fruit of my pleasant attaint, lo! how traitorous love serveth me with dishes of mortal annoy, and in place of the dainties which others find in the end of their long hope, it is I that am presented with the banquet of all bitter confections, which makes me here resign, and declare my fatal testament upon, the inconstancy of that pleasant folly: whom as I leave at liberty to make his gain of others as well as he hath dallied with me, so I rejoice in the exchange of so great an evil for so present a consolation as death; in whom I hope to find no less contentment and quiet, than the other hath assailed me with diversity of passion.

" Retire, O cursed mishap, to the end that, dying by thy means, I may live without thee in the other world ; where, in place of a thousand annoys, which (if I should consent to longer life) thou hast yet to thunder upon me, I shall be sure of eternal repose, nourished with the invisible food which God imparts to His angels and souls assisting His heavenly paradise. Come death, and do thine office upon this wretched girl, who attends the sharpness of thy dart, to prevent the piercing arrows of mine adversary !

" Ah, poor heart ! devoid of hope and desperate touching the consummation of thy desires, cease henceforth to wish the fruition of longer term, seeing destiny, love, and life are determined to dismiss me here hence to sue for peace elsewhere, and embrace the ghost of him whose life was sacrificed to the disloyalty of this wretch ; who also, for his part, not satisfied with the blood of innocency, takes no compassion upon my tears, which I wish to distil by such abundance, that, in overflowing the vital parts in me, he might see me perish in his presence, drowned with the inundation of undeserved sorrow proceeding by his wickedness."

Wherewith her eyes performed her desire with such plenty of tears that there was not one of the company void of compassion on the behalf of the dolour which tormented her, not ceasing notwithstanding to persuade her to pity toward that poor Diego ; who, being newly recovered by the diligence of the assistants sprinkling fresh water of the fountain upon his face, did no sooner lift up his sorrowful lids, beholding the lamentable passion of his mistress, with certain likelihoods he espied showing an increase of her disdain towards him, but he retired to his former debility, falling down dead between the arms of such as supported him ; and albeit he was eftsoons restored, yet the force of his passion assailed him still with three or four mortal pangs, one in the neck of another, in such sort, as the whole company gave judgment of his death : amongst the which Roderico was not the least amazed, who, grieving indifferently with the obstinate cruelty of Genivera and present peril of his dear friend Diego, was in long debate what policy to use to qualify the one and prevent the danger of the other.

He persuaded that if he killed the wilful Genivera, he should also give end to the days of Diego ; for that, upon the view and remembrance of the one, depended the life of the

other; and so, in doing no good to any, he should commit double offence to God and the world, both in spotting his soul with uncivil murder, and also to become the author of his death in whose life he reposed his most worldly felicity. On the other side, the untowardness of the girl argued her intractable in such sort as he desired, which confirmed the continual martyrdom of his friend; whose distress, as it moved him to such inward remorse that to procure his delivery he made no conscience to light a candle afore the devil, so he gave a new charge upon the good-will of Genivera with gentle persuasions, laying afore her what virtue ought to appear in such tender and delicate years, and how greatly the vice of ingratitude defaced the renown of a gentlewoman assisted with cruelty without reason.

Wherein, gaining no less than if he had never put the device in execution, he retired to the extremity of his former threats and last policy, swearing that she should find no difference between the summons and effect, seeing that by her death he should give end to her disdain and desolate state of his friend, who, as he doubted not, would discern in time what commodity it were to purge the air of such contagious filths of ungrateful arrogance, so he was also of opinion that time would yield commendation to his fact, chiefly for that, in preserving the honour of a family, he thought it more expedient to exterminate the two principal offenders, than to reserve the life of either of them for an utter extinction of the glory of the whole house. Wherefore, regarding the rest of his train, he commanded to lay hands of the obstinate gentlewoman, with her two companions, with charge to use no less mercy in their several executions than the chiefest of the three extended pity to the amorous knight, which he thought would yield up the ghost afore her.

The lady, hearing the sentence definitive of her life, escried the murder with open mouth, as if she had expected some succour to defend her from death. Wherein her hope was frustrated, for the desert fostered no other company but such as were ready in the place to commit execution. The page and poor *chambrière* held up their hands for mercy to Roderico, who, feigning an impediment in his hearing, made a sign to his men to put effect to his commandment. Genivera, entreating for the lives of her page and woman, desired that their innocency might not do penance for the

offence which she had done, craving with great humility that the punishment might be performed upon her, "from whom the fault—if it be a matter meritorious of blame," saith she, "for a woman to keep her faith to her husband—is derived, and yield justice to these unfortunate wretches, lest the execution of their innocency increase your detestable offence.

"Oh!" saith she, with her hands and eyes beholding the heavens, "thou my most dear and lawful husband, whose soul I see walking in the midst of the loyal lovers, what better proof canst thou have of the sincerity of my love than to see me lay my body upon the altar of immolation to untimely death for thy sake? Neither shalt thou for thy part, O butcher and mortal murderer of my carcass, to whose cruelty my destiny hath consented in quenching thy thirst with the blood of a pure maid, glorify hereafter to have forced the heart of a simple gentlewoman, and much less made a breach into her honour, either by terrible threats or sugared persuasions." Upon which last words, notwithstanding, attended such arguments of terror that a man would have thought that the very remembrance of death had somewhat qualified her vehemency and mortified the greatest part of her former furies. Dom Diego by this time came to himself, and seeing the discourse of the tragedy ready to present his last act, with the death of his fair mistress, Genivera *la Blonde*, was driven to force himself to speak for the life of her whose cruelty had committed him almost to the pangs of extreme danger. Wherefore, staying the diligence of such as had the charge of execution, he addressed him to Roderico with this request:

"My lord and great friend, the present experience of your rare friendship hath made so liberal a proof of your undoubted meaning towards me, that if I should live the age of a whole world I should not be able to discharge the bonds of your desert; so, considering the cause of this misfortune proceeds only of the malice of mine own destiny, and that it is a vanity to contend with the things which the heavens have determined upon us, I beseech you, by the virtue of your honour and for a confirmation of all the good turns you have done me, to grant me yet one request, which is, that, in pardoning the life of this gentlewoman and her company, you will return them to the place from whence you brought them, with no less assurance and safety than if you guided your miserable Dom Diego.

"For my part, being fully resolved not to keep war with my destinies, I am persuaded to a contentment touching my lot, assuring you, for the rest, that the sorrow which I see she suffereth giveth me more cause of passion, than the grief which I endure by her means troubleth me. Let her live in peace, and me in expectation to receive end of my torments by the devouring knife, which is ordained to cut in sunder the fillet whereupon depends the fatal course of my cursed years. Till which time, I have sworn to keep residence in these solitary deserts, as well to endure the penance of my own indiscretion, as also to continue in secret prayer to the Almighty for the continual quiet of her who may boldly vaunt to be the mistress of the most loyal servant that ever meant honour or service to lady."

Who doubts in the marvellous forces of love, let him be absolved with this example; seeing that as the impression which we call love hath power to bring to an unity the minds that lived in separation, make indissoluble peace with the quarrels which seem immortal, qualifying the rigour of those hearts which, without this passion, no other policy could appease, so, when he discovereth the full perfection of his effects, he prefers such a facility in things which erst seemed impossible, that, by his only means, they become neither dangerous to pursue nor hard to obtain: which appeared rightly in this young lady; in whom, as the sinister conceit of a former jealousy, her affected zeal contracted to another, with her just cause of anger for his death, had engendered a disdain to Dom Diego, an extreme desire to revenge her wrong upon Dom Roderico, and, by the same means, to end her own life, so love, removing the veil that blinded the eyes of her understanding, and breaking the adamant rock planted in the midst of her stomach, brought her in one instant to behold with open eyes the constancy, patience, and perseverance of her first and most loyal servant.

Whose last prayer and intercession on her behalf stirred up in her more remorse than all the services of court or penance in the painful wilderness were ever able to prefer: whereof she exposed a present effect in casting her arms about the neck of the desperate knight, to whom she forbare no sorts of kisses nor amorous embracings, seeming no less passioned with joy and love on his behalf than erst she seemed plunged in despair and sorrow, balancing indifferently between life

and death in his presence. Neither was she able to pronounce any word upon the sudden, till (being restored to the use of her tongue) by the discontinuance of her trance, she excused her former rigour with terms of humility, and, desiring pardon of the follies wherewith she had abused his patience, offered herself hereafter to be the slave and servant of his shadow, taking the assistance of the imperfections in love to be in some sort contributory to her fault.

" For that " saith she, " as love hath this vice of nature, that such as account themselves to see most clear are they which most often commit greatest faults by ignorance ; so, besides the confession of the wrong I have done you so many ways, lo ! I am ready to abide the punishment of your own judgment, without craving any dispense of justice or moderation of penance for my respect of favour. And, albeit for my part I have not escaped without passion, but that the storms of adversity which you have seen me endure have driven me to the uttermost of my patience, yet I account myself happy to have passed that away, for the experience I have made of two effects of virtuous extremities ; the one of constant loyalty in you, which only hath right to challenge the crown of glory from him that sacrificed himself upon the bloody body of his lady (who in dying so gave end to his annoys, where you have chosen a kind of languishing life of more hard toleration a thousand times than the sharp arrows of death) ; the other consists in the clemency wherewith you have mortified so well the rage of your adversaries that I, which erst hated you to death, am now so vanquished by your courtesy, that I account mine honour and life of too small value to requite your merit. Wherein also I acknowledge a debt to Seigneur Roderico, whose wisdom makes me ashamed of my folly in resisting his rightful demand touching the relief of your undeserved distress."

Whereunto as he would have replied with semblable humility, Dom Roderico prevented his meaning in embracing them both, with peculiar commendation to their virtues, and special thanks to the goodness of their fortune, for that without peril of honour they had passed that dangerous passage ; advising them to return with him to his castle, from whence he said he would give warning to their mothers, to whom he also undertook to colour the accident with some other circumstance of feigned substance. Whereupon they

mounted on horseback, leaving the stately hospital to the next hermit; and using easy journeys, they took away the tediousness of the way with the pleasant devices which passed between the two lovers, embracing one another in honest sort, as a simple recompense of their long and weary annoys, till time, with the consent of the Church, gave authority to consummate the rest of their desires.

From the house of Roderico was advertisement given to the two lady mothers (in equal care for the loss of their children), excusing the secret departure of Genivera in that she went to see Dom Diego, lying sick in a castle of his friend Seigneur Roderico; where, if it pleased them to give their consent, the marriage should be performed. Wherein there needs no pithy solicitors to neither of the widows, for that, for the more honour of the feast and contentment in the alliance, they failed not there in person at the day appointed; where the marriage was performed with pomp, according to the magnificience of both their houses.

And so it is to be thought that the storms and torments past, endured by them both, yielded this conclusion of other taste than they which (without painful travail in the presence of love) possess, the first day, the full of their desire; whose pleasures, certainly, as they resemble the condition of him who, nourished all the days of his life in dainty fare, cannot judge so well of delight as he that sometimes finds want of such delicacy; so also an extreme thirst makes us find the wine more pleasant, and a long fasting gives a better taste to our meat. Neither is love without annoy any other thing than a cause without an effect; for he that will take away the painful travails and long suit, robs the lover of the praise of his constancy, and doth wrong to the glory of his pursuit; seeing that he only is worthy to wear the crown of triumph, who, encountering all conflicts, doth repose more assurance in the virtue of his constancy than fear in any sort the malice of any fortune.

Let this be then the mirror of loyal lovers, in detestation of the impudicity of such which fear not to give a charge where they find good countenance, and ready retire at the first repulse; imparting also a participation of worthy rebuke to the others, who, to content the humour of their fond affection, do account it a virtue to exchange their former generosity with a glorious title to be reputed as true and

faithful champions of love; for that the perfection to love truly, consists not in passion or pining cares, and much less cometh he to the full of his desire by sighs, dolorous regards, or lamentable exclamations, according to the Spaniard, nor solemn vows to visit far places for her sake, or childish tears, as the amorous Italian—to whom also we may add this Barcelonian, Diego, who thought, through his desperate penance in the deserts of the Pyrenees, to reclaim the good-will of his mistress—seeing that, as in all our affairs, we ought not exceed the institution of virtue, so she chiefly is to bear a sway in the knot of this indissoluble amity.

Besides, we see here that the diligence of a perfect friend is of more force in those cases than all the passions, pangs, letters of pithy persuasion, or other importunities whatsoever, tolerated in matters of love; neither can a man judge what a treasure it is to have an assured friend, till either the want of such a jewel, or experience of his friendship, make him taste the benefit of so great and rare a gift; seeing that a true friend, being the second part or one moiety of ourselves, is always so guided by a natural sympathy of affection towards him whom he loveth, that he rejoiceth in the pleasure and commodity of his friend, and is ready to participate with his adversity when fortune is disposed to play any part of her accustomed mobility. Whereof, albeit, we find not at this day so many thoroughly perfect in that virtue, as the whole world on all parts swarms with infinity of the contrary faction, which the Grecian philosopher calleth *microphilos*—that is, a demi—or half—friend, according to the English phrase.

Yet am I moved, by diverse occasions, to pass over such discourse, contenting myself that the diversity of my histories give recreation to the reader, without staying to infer authorities which may touch or sift the conscience of any. And observing chiefly, as near as I could, an order of truth, my second respect was to prefer such examples as might best serve to instruct our youth, who as they may see here the faults of fragility punished with shame, loss of honour, cruel death, and perpetual infamy to their posterity; so have they also, of the contrary, special patterns of virtue, alluring them to imitation of semblable honesty, with diversity of authorities proving the reward of virtue and virtuous living. Whereof let all degrees make their profit as they think good;

according to the fly in the milk, feeding of the good and virtuous fruit; and leave the rest, as poison and bitter dregs, to such as are wholly drowned in the desires of the flesh and buried in a pit of worldly filth. And as I have seemed in some places to interlard this profane translation with certain testimonies out of sacred records, so I hope the same will the rather defend the integrity of mine intent against all objections; considering that the most part of the simple and ignorant sort are rather moved with such examples than reduced with the severe sentences of some great philosopher or reformed theologian.

Besides, in these discourses of love, the adulterer is put in remembrance of his fault, the murderer seeth the reward of his iniquity, he that yields to the summons of foul concupiscence is sure to be touched with the mark of infamy, and such as passioneth himself upon credit may behold here the meed of his folly; wherein, for my part, as I grieve that the world (at this present) swarmeth with so great a number of incensed men ready to die for a pleasure of so small moment as the contentment of the body, so I wish that as in writing these tragical affairs I have found the fault of mine own life, that also the rest of the younglings of our country, in reading my endeavour, may break the sleep of their long folly, and retire at last to amendment of life; lest, in remaining still in the labyrinth of sensuality, they serve not hereafter as a fable and stage play to the posterity of a multitude. For end, I expect no other hire of my travail, than that my diligence may seem thankful to her to whose honour and goodness I owe no less than all that I have.

FINIS

GLOSSARY

adamant : the loadstone.
advertisement : admonition.
alley : a garden-walk.
allow : 1 to approve, praise ; 2 to take into account.
Almain : 1 a German ; 2 Germany.
amass : a collection.
amber : ambergris.
artificial : ingenious, artful.
assist : to be present at.
assistant : a bystander.
assize : to assess.
assot : to infatuate.
attend : to await.
avent : to discharge.

baciamano : a salutation.
bail : a lease, contract.
baine : a bath.
baiser les mains : to kiss hands.
bale : woe.
bashaw : a Turkish pasha.
bewray : to divulge, betray.
biggined : clad in a *biggin* or night-cap.
blonde : golden-haired.
board : to accost.
bodkin : 1 a frizzling-iron ; 2 a dagger.
bolk : to belch, burst out, give vent to.
bonjour : good-day.
bonsoir : good-night.
bourreau : 1 an executioner ; 2 a tormentor.
brickle : brittle.

cankered : ill-tempered, malignant.
canvasado : a sudden attack.
caquet : gossip.
career : a course.
careful : sorrowful.
cataplasm : a cure (*lit.* a plaster, poultice).
catastrophe : the turning-point.
catchpole : a tax-gatherer.
caterpillar : an extortioner.
caul : a woman's head-dress.
chambrière : a woman of the bed-chamber.
champaign : open country.
civilian : a practitioner of civil law.
clerk : a scholar.
clerkly : learnedly.
climate : *see* planet.
coast : to attack, assail.
coast : 1 a district, region ; 2 a point of the compass, direction.
cockney : an effeminate citizen.
coherent : an accomplice.
colcarrier : a messenger (a word evidently coined by Fenton on the analogy of the French *colporteur*).
collation : discourse.
colour : a pretence.
commodity : advantage, interest (*cf.* discommodity).
complot : a plot, plan.
conceit : a thought, opinion.
confining : adjoining, bordering.
constellation : *see* planet.
conster : to construe.
Cornwall : evidently a pun, with suggestion of *cornuted :* cuckolded (*cf.* forked, hornsby).
cousin : a kinsman.
cross-caper : a dancing metaphor.
curious : scrupulous.
curtal : a drab.

danger : control, power.
dariolette : a lover's confidant.
dashbuckler : a swaggerer.
defend : to ward off.
denier : a copper coin.
dermopteræ : flying creatures.
detest : to curse.
diabolos : a slanderer (here used as plural).
diamantine : adamant.
didapper : the dabchick, a diving bird.
dilicarie : pleasure.

discover : to reveal.
dole : lamentation.

earnest penny : a pledge.
effect : a sign, token.
eftsoons : soon.
ell : used in proverbial sense of *excess*.
embase : to lower.
embassage, embassing : a mission, message.
entire : entirety.
entreat : to entertain.
escarfion : a veil (?).
escry : to proclaim, cry out against.
estockado : a stab.
evenement : an occurrence.
event : 1 to vent ; 2 to cool.
exhibition : a monetary allowance.

fact : a deed.
fawn : a young animal, cub.
fear : to terrify.
fielden : rustic.
fisc : the state treasury.
flanker : a cannon placed on the flank.
flesh : to inure (*lit.*, to initiate to the taste of flesh).
forest : a chase.
forked : cuckolded (*cf.* Cornwall, hornsby).
franklin : a yeoman.

garde-robe : a closet.
genièvre : the juniper (pun on name *Genivera*).
gentry : high-birth.
geste : a posture.
gig : a spinning-top, *hence* a giddy girl.
glaive : a sword.
glee : bright colour, beauty.
glee : a glance.
goodman : a husband, master of the house.
government : behaviour.
gramercy : thanks.
grange : a remote farm-house.
grenade : the pomegranate.
gull : to guzzle.

haggard : 1 an untamed hawk ; 2 wild, intractable (*cf.* reclaim).
helluo : a glutton, greedy devourer.
hire : reward.
honest : honourable.
honesty : honour.
hornsby : a cuckold (*cf.* Cornwall, forked).
hospital : a hospice.
huishing : onomatopœic, used of the sound of water.
humours : reference to physiological theory that the bodily fluids determined the individual temperament.

imp : 1 a scion, graft ; 2 a child.
impeach : to hinder.
incarnate : rosy, flesh-coloured.
indifference : impartiality.
indifferent : impartial, equal.
inquirendum : an inquiry.

jamb : a street-corner.
jennet : a small horse.
jess : the leather strap attached to a hawk.
jet : to swagger.
jonking : onomatopœic, used of the nightingale's song.
journey : a day's travel.

khan : official title of ruler of Tartary.
kind : nature.

lance : to leap, bound.
lee : shelter, protection (nautical metaphor).
let : to hinder.
limitrophal : neighbouring.
loon : a rogue, idler.
lutin : a hobgoblin.

marmotte : a monkey (applied to a bawd).
marrow : a partner.
maugre : in spite of.
Mauretine : a Moor.

médecin : a doctor.
mew : to confine, imprison.
mock-holiday : sport, mockery.
moine : a monk, friar.
mount : a mountain.

nestcockle : a nestling.

ordinary : 1 a rule, custom ; 2 fare, commons.

painful : painstaking.
palliard : a rascal.
parent : a kinsman.
passenger : a passer-by.
pavise : to shield, shelter, ward off.
peculiar : personal, particular.
pelting : contemptible.
pendle : a pendant.
perie : onomatopœic, used of breathing.
philautos : a philanderer (?).
philauty : self-love.
plancher : a flooring.
planet : used with reference to astrological belief in the influence of the stars (*cf.* climate, constellation).
plat : a dish, concoction (with "plat of the tongue," *cf.* French "plat de la langue" : "wheedling-talk").
polylogos : a talkative person (here used as plural).
pomado : *see* toto pomado.
popinjay : a parrot.
postey : power.
prefer : to offer, present.
present : immediate.
prest : ready.
prevent : to anticipate, forestall.
princox : a coxcomb, spoiled child.
proper : personal.
prose : story.
pucelle : a maid (applied to Joan of Arc).

quick : alive.

rampire : 1 to fortify ; 2 a fortification.
receuil : a collection.
reclaim : to recall a hawk (*cf.* haggard).
rehalation : restoration of breath.
rent : income, revenue.
repeal : to recall.
river : the sport of hawking (often practised by the river-side).
rôlet : character.
romant : a tale.
runagate : a vagabond.

scaffold : a stage.
Scilicia : "the stone of Scilicia" is perhaps *silica*, connected by Fenton with *Cilicia*.
scrip : a pilgrim's wallet.
sear : a trigger ("light of the sear" : "fickle").
secretary : a confidant.
seld : seldom.
semblable : like.
siege : a seat, place.
silly : 1 innocent ; 2 helpless.
slent : 1 to gibe ; 2 a sly hit.
soma : a body.
sound, sounding : a swoon, fainting-fit.
speed : fortune.
squaring : contentious.
stale : a trap, decoy.
stomach : the breast (*cf.* stomacher).
Stradiotes : Milanese troops.
strip : to overpass.
success : result.
suds : 1 ooze ; 2 floods.
sympathy : reciprocal love.

table : a picture.
Taranto : reference to the *tarantula*, or spider of *Tarentum*, whose bite was supposed to cause *tarantism*, or dancing mania, alleged to be cured by the *tarantella* dance and melody.
tassel-gentle : a male hawk.
tell : to count.
tester : the upper part of a bed.
testey : evidence, proof.
tewel : a shaft.
thrum : thread, tissue.
tickle : inconstant.
tintamarre : tumult.
toil : a net (hunting term).
tonse : to shear.

toto pomado : a complete vault (an exercise of horsemanship, consisting of vaulting upon or over a horse by placing one's hand on the pommel of the saddle).
towardness : ability.
train : 1 a stratagem, trickery; 2 to decoy.
tutor : a protector.

university : whole, total.
unthrift : a prodigal.

vent : a sale.
voyage : a journey (by land or sea).

Waywode : official title of ruler of Transylvania, applied to John Hunyadi.
wearish : withered.
weed : a garment.
woodness : madness.
wrabbed : perverse.

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